EXPLORING ONLINE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

TO PROPAGATE MEAT CONSUMPTION IDEOLOGIES

A Thesis

by

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ABSTRACT

Animals are raised for human consumption. This practice has become an increasingly divisive issue in America. On one side of this issue are those who believe that eating animals and using their byproducts is natural, normal, necessary, and nice; on the other are those believe consumption of animals is unnecessary and morally wrong. The purpose of this study was to explore how pro- and anti-meat consumption organizations communicate, reinforce, and advance their ideology online to actively shape public opinion. Online textual and visual strategies were examined, building on the foundational tenets of ELM, social identity theory, anti-consumption/reasons against, and inoculation theory. The homepages of three anti-meat organizations and three pro-meat organization websites were examined using a multi-phase content analysis that included critical discourse analysis, persuasive narratives, and semiotics strategies. Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected.

Input and output of animal production is contrasted on the pro- and anti-meat websites. Animal Rights Vegan Activists (ARVA) organizations portray animals as having souls, and are portrayed as equals to humans. Compassionate people are portrayed as those who expose the cruelty of using animals as a food source, and are vegan. Pursuit, rescue, and wretched excess plots are favored. Inoculations against lifestyle norms and values are favored. ARVA consistently portrays itself as an alternative societal lifestyle.

The meat organizations focus exclusively on food. Meat is quick, easy, affordable, and nutritious. Families want to eat it, and consumers feel good about serving it. Adventure, discovery, and maturation plots are favored. Inoculations against other meats, rather than against ARVA are present. Lifestyle norms and values, credibility, and information about meat appeared to be the inoculations favored. Rather than strengthening the universal brand of meat, the organizations actively subvert it through internal competition. Instead, pro-meat consumption organizations should promote their universal brand (i.e., meat) in a manner that not only resonates with the average consumer, but also encourages collective action by consumers in defense of the meat industry.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to those who live their lives by their convictions.

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NOMENCLATURE

ARVA   Animal Rights Vegan Activist

FARM   Farm Animal Rights Movement

Meat   The universal brand of the meat industry, including beef, pork, and poultry, as well as animal byproducts, e.g., leather, silk, and soaps

MFA   Mercy For Animals

NAMI   North American Meat Institute

NCBA   National Cattlemen's Beef Association

NPPC   National Pork Producers Council

PETA   People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals

USPEA   U.S. Poultry & Egg Association

Veg*n   Consumer who makes dietary and purchase decisions on the vegan to vegetarian (which ranges from avoiding certain meat products to not eating any meat products) spectrum

Vegetarian   Consumers who do not eat meat

Vegan   Consumer who abstains from all forms of consumption of animals and their byproducts, e.g., steak, eggs, leather, honey, silk, and soaps, in addition to chemical products that have been tested on animals

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Animals are raised for human consumption (Sapkota, Lefferts, McKenzie, & Walker, 2007). This practice has become an increasingly divisive issue in America. On one side of this issue are those who believe that eating animals and using their byproducts is natural, normal, necessary, and nice; on the other are those who believe consumption of animals is unnecessary and morally wrong (Piazza, Ruby, Loughnan, Luong, Kulik, Watkins, & Seigerman, 2015). Brand managers for organizations involved in the production, processing, and distribution of meat are increasingly faced with questioning and cynical consumers who not only resist branding efforts, but actively subvert them (Jeanes, 2013).

According to a 2012 Gallup poll, most consumers in America are omnivores and support, or are indifferent to, the meat industry, which includes beef, pork, and poultry, as well as all animal byproducts (e.g., leather, silk, and soaps). Five percent of the population identify as veg*n and make purchase decisions on the vegetarian to vegan spectrum. Purchase decisions on this spectrum range from avoiding certain meat products to not eating any meat products to not consuming any meat products or byproducts (Gallup, 2012). Two percent of the U.S. population specifically identify themselves as vegan (Gallup, 2012). Vegans are consumers who abstain from all forms of consumption of animals and animal byproducts (e.g., steak, eggs, leather, honey, silk, and soaps), in addition to chemical products that have been tested on animals (Vegan

Action, 2016). Cronin, McCarthy and Collins (2014) found that these consumers bond in micro-cultural communities of consumption, fostering a collective identity grounded in shared beliefs and values. Their bonds are often reinforced through a united opposition to dominant lifestyle norms and mainstream consumer sensibilities, where their collective identity is used to challenge societal rules and counteract market-led norms (Cronin et al., 2014).

Personal anti-consumption and alternate consumption protests by individual activists have thus morphed into collective action by consumer animal activist organizations. These organizations are gaining traction in the U.S. and are effectively swaying public opinion through the use of compelling narratives in their marketing outreach efforts. Legislation, such as California's Proposition 2, Standards for Confining Farm Animals (2008), has been successfully passed, and is impacting the profitability and production practices of the targeted commodities (Mercy For Animals, n.d.). Protect the Harvest, a non-profit organization that works to protect Americans rights to hunt, fish, and farm, reported that Proposition 2 would require an additional 588,000 acres of land to house enough chickens to make up for the increased chicken mortality rate in cage-free systems (Protect the Harvest, 2015). Similarly, Ohio's Livestock Care Standards Board phased out gestation and veal crates in response to a Mercy For Animals investigation of Conklin Dairy Farms (Mercy For Animals, n.d.). The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) is pressuring major corporations to stop doing business with pork producers (Protect the Harvest, 2015). McDonald's, which buys 2 billion eggs annually, recently decided to transition to "cage-free" eggs, as did Burger

King, Dunkin' Donuts, and Starbucks (Mohan, 2015). According to the USDA, the price gap of eggs between California and New York rose from a 12-cent differential in October 2014 to $1 in January 2015.

The impact of meat-avoidance goes well beyond the personal dietary choices of 5% of the U.S. population. According to the North American Meat Institute (NAMI), the meat industry is the largest segment of U.S. agriculture and is an integral part of the U.S. economy (NAMI, 2015). The U.S. meat industry is comprised of a wide variety of companies, including companies that produce, process, distribute and sell meat and poultry products (NAMI, 2015). The industry also includes manufacturers of meat, poultry and related products (e.g., hides, feathers, and offal) (NAMI, 2015). Companies that sell and distribute these products, supply goods and services to manufacturers, distributors and retailers, as well as companies whose sales depend on workers in the meat industry are also included in the U.S. meat industry (NAMI, 2015). These companies offer jobs paying an average of $47,332 in annual wages and benefits (NAMI, 2015). Companies in the U.S. meat industry employ 1,871,987 people nationally, and generate an additional 3,569,098 jobs in supplier and ancillary industries (NAMI, 2015). The industry generates business for companies in all 509 economic sectors, including those seemingly unrelated to meat, such as banking, travel, and printing (NAMI, 2016). In 2015, the meat and poultry industry generated an estimated $1.02 trillion in economic activity nationwide (NAMI, 2016). Table 1 summarizes the economic impact of the meat industry in the U.S. These companies and their employees generate $81.2 billion in tax revenues to federal, state and local governments, and an

additional $2.4 billion state sales taxes is generated by consumers of meat (NAMI, 2015).

Table 1. *Economic Impact of the Meat Industry in the United States*

	Direct	Supplier	Induced	Total
Jobs (FTE)	1,871,987	2,003,952	1,565,146	5,441,085
Wages	$71,630,322,700	$104,905,068,700	$81,000,810,300	$257,536,201,700
Economic Impact	$348,191,689,400	$408,210,785,000	$259,178,381,600	$1,015,580,856,000

Note. Adapted from "*The Meat and Poultry Industry Creates Jobs in the United States*" by the North American Meat Institute, 2016, p. 1.

Public and policymaker understanding of agriculture is so critical that the American Association for Agricultural Education's National Research Agenda 2016-2020 directly addresses it (Roberts, Harder & Brashears, 2016). According to Enns, Martin, and Spielmaker (2016), "Providing the public and policymakers with accurate information about agricultural and natural resource concepts has been an ongoing effort in literature for more than 25 years" (p. 14). The average consumer is more than three generations removed from the farm (Hughes, Johnson, Edgar, Miller & Cox, 2016). Only 1% of the U.S. population works on farms, with another 15% of the workforce in agriculture-related jobs. However, policy decisions that impact the agriculture industry are being strongly influenced by the 84% of the population that is not directly involved in the industry (Roberts, et al., 2016), and consumer perceptions toward agriculture are becoming increasingly negative (Hughes, et al., 2016). Consumers are questioning the merits of agricultural production methods (e.g., genetically modified foods) and food

processing technologies (e.g., "pink slime"), and how these systems effect personal health, the environment and the economy (Roberts, et al., 2016).

As in any industry, agriculture businesses must effectively communicate with current and potential customers (Hughes, et al., 2016). Agricultural commodity groups often focus their marketing campaigns on improving agricultural literacy (Hughes, et al., 2016). Perhaps, however, the issue to focus on is not literacy, but rather consumer identity. Agricultural literacy is comprised of an understanding of agricultural methods, a vocabulary of agricultural terms, and an understanding of the impact of agriculture (Frick & Spotanski, 1990). Vegan activist groups, on the other hand, can use consumer's reduced agricultural literacy as a tool to sway public perceptions of agriculture in their favor (Doefert, 2011), and have documented successes in altering both commodity procedures and public policy (Mohan, 2015).

Summary of the Problem

Animal Rights Vegan Activists (ARVA) have challenged the hegemonic concept of meat. Theses consumers, although a small portion of the U.S. population, have impacted the legislative policies, production processes, and market prices of the meat industry. The meat industry generates more than $1 trillion in economic activity nationwide.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Influencing Consumer Attitudes and Behaviors

Words and the Perception of Reality

Fairclough and Wodak (1997) stated that language is both socially constructed and socially conditioned. Language creates, not just reflects, one's reality (McGregor, 2003). Language use directs attention and frames perceptions (Krippendorff, 2006). Are crops harvested and processed, or murdered and dismembered? Language has ideological effects; it can sustain, undermine and transform power relations between groups of people (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). By analyzing discourse, researchers can infer the values and ideologies of those organizations (McGregor, 2003). Ideology, as defined by Verschueren (2012), is "any basic pattern of meaning or frame of interpretation bearing on or involved in (an) aspect(s) of social 'reality' (in particular in the realm of social relations in the public sphere), felt to be commonsensical, and often functioning in a normative way" (p. 200). Due to this normative functionality, ideology is rarely questioned and is highly immune to discrepancies in experience and observation (Verschueren, 2012).

Consumers internalize their culture's rules of grammar and rules of appropriate speech usage (Adedun & Shodipe, 2011). As such, diction, the choice and use of words and phrases, is very important in persuasive language (Jin, 2011). Vivid adjectives and active verbs are powerful tactics organizations use to maintain ideologies (Stella, 2015).

The use of second person perspective more fully engages readers, as they are placed in the message rather than having to use cognitive resources to self-apply the message (Jin, 2011). Consumers are highly influenced by the use of transitivity, and persuasive appeals (Moore, 2014). Transitivity refers to foregrounding or backgrounding of information, particularly through the use of personification and euphemisms. For example, an anthropomorphized sow may be referred to as 'she' or 'the expectant mother' and is 'imprisoned in a gestation crate,' as compared to an objectified sow who may be referred to as 'it' or 'pig' and is 'protected from the aggressive behaviors of other pigs.' Persuasive appeals are used to influence consumer purchasing decisions or support of a cause. These appeals speak to an individual's need, wants, or interests, and may be emotional (e.g., invokes feelings), rational (e.g., centers on facts or statistics), or ethical (e.g., uses a credible endorser). Words are powerful tools for communication.

Brand Narratives and Persuasive Storytelling

Branding creates awareness about an organization and what it stands for (Du Plessis, 2015). The American Marketing Association defines brand as a "name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers" (AMA Dictionary, https://www.ama.org/resources/Pages/Dictionary.aspx?dLetter=B). Leveraging brand loyalty has been recognized as an important part of assuring a company's long-term financial success (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; De Chernatony, McDonald & Wallace, 2011; Shirazi, Lorestani, & Mazidi, 2013; Tuškej, Golob, & Podnar, 2013). Brand

loyalty leads highly desirable outcomes such as reduced costs for attracting and maintaining customers, and increased sales (Aaker, 1991; Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Aleman, 2001; Shirazi, et al., 2013). According to Tuškej, Golob, and Podnar (2013), brands not only play an important role in the everyday lives of consumers, they can even influence the construction of the consumer's self-identity.

Organizations often utilize narratives and storytelling to build consumer brand loyalty. The power of a brand story lies in both its ability to create a meaningful relationship between the brand and consumers and its ability to influence consumer behavior (Lin & Chen, 2015). According to Lee and Shin (2012), storytelling is widely used in brand marketing throughout the world and is one of the most fundamental forms of communication, allowing people to share knowledge and experiences and to relay concepts and causal relations. Stories are how we make sense of the world (Lambert, 2013). Compelling stories inspire and engage consumers (Smith & Wontrob, 2015). "Storytelling is a staple of public relations, from crisis to branding, to identity, to reputation" (Kent, 2015, p. 480). Storytelling can differentiate brands in competitive markets, strengthen the identity of brands, and create value (Lin & Chen, 2015). Smith and Wontrob (2015) note that "We can't force people to notice our brands, but if we make them part of a bigger story, they become more meaningful to consumers' lives" (p. 36). Brand storytelling typically uses persuasion to convey beliefs on which consumers can base their own identities (Du Plessis, 2015). A compelling brand story promotes persuasion through heightened affective responses; while a story's focus on facts

increases consumer reliance on cognitive processing of the substance of the message (Lin & Chen, 2015).

Dahlstrom (2014) noted that narratives offer increased comprehension and engagement for consumers, and that mass media content in particular is biased toward narrative formats. "The story form invites the audience to consider issues, to have a deeper sense of why something is important, and that naturally orients people to consider the idea or approach to the experience" (Lambert, 2013, p. 127). Narratives are intrinsically persuasive, which offers communicators a useful tool for influencing otherwise resistant audiences (Dahlstrom, 2014; Flynn, 2015). "Motivational communication is all about storytelling, and the right story can inspire someone to get up and act, to change their position, to get others involved in a cause" (Lambert, 2013, p. 127). According to Dahlstrom (2014), narratives can rarely be countered with facts with any effectiveness. As narratives describe a particular experience rather than general truths, narratives have no need to justify the accuracy of their claims (Dahlstrom, 2014).

According to Kent (2015), stories enable consumers to become a part of a shared cultural experience, whether or not they were originally part of it. "Stories inform nearly every aspect of cultural life, from political ideology and party identification, to interpersonal perceptions of colleagues and friends. Stories shape how people perceive events and make sense of the world" (Kent, 2015, p. 481). According to Lambert (2013), the human brain unconsciously processes 10 billion sensory inputs every day. Consumers process stories in multiple ways – factually, visually and emotionally, making it highly likely that the consumers will remember them (Dahlstrom, 2014;

Lundqvist, Liljander, Gummerus, & Van Riel, 2013). Advertising research has shown that stories are analyzed less critically and provoke less negative thoughts than standard advertisements, are perceived as more convincing than facts, and significantly more memorable (Dahlstrom, 2014; Flynn, 2015; Lundqvist et al., 2013).

Storytelling is an important tool to create meanings and build emotional connection between brands and consumers; advertisements in narrative forms are frequently used by enterprises for consumer's identification with their business values and cultures, and ultimately to shape consumer's attitude of the brand and to build customer loyalty (Yu & Chang, 2013). Stories showcase heroes; marketers can turn the brand, or the consumer, into a hero to improve brand perceptions (Lundqvist et al., 2013). Lambert (2013) discussed the power that marketers, particularly in online formats, have over cultural norms. "They are counting on the shaping of our desires and fears, they need to connect to our intimate selves in order to sustain our attention, but their real goal is to shape our identities as *Homo consumerus*" (Lambert, 2013, p. 12). The distinct advantage of narrative use lies in its ability to elicit a greater emotional response in more vulnerable or resistant populations, such as ambivalent or veg*n consumers (Flynn, 2015).

Narratives follow a predictable structure that describes the cause-and-effect relationship between events that take place over a particular time period that impact particular characters, in such a way that the conclusion seems inevitable, even though many outcomes could have been possible (Dahlstrom, 2014; Kent, 2015). "Persuasive narratives are those that can direct cognitive resources toward processing the narrative

elements and away from resistance" (Flynn, 2015, p. 7). Storytellers use various modes

of communication, including text, images, and signs, for expressing everyday

experiences and cultural values (Liang, 2015).

Images, Signs, and Symbols

Brands communicate with consumers visually through signs, symbols, and

images. Saussere's analysis of sign systems, specifically the signifier and the signified,

and Peirce's doctrine of signs, somewhat resembling logic, are considered to be the

foundations of semiotics (Chandler, 2007). Poststructuralist semioticians, including

Halliday and Tagg, disavow the notion of a decodable literal truth; rather they focus on a

social reality in which the signs are decoded (Chandler, 2007). The meaning and

interpretation of images and icons are social constructions influenced by the

understanding of the audience (Chandler, 1994; Stepchenkova & Zhan, 2013). Chandler

(1994) describes iconic signs, such as the image of a boy on a restroom door, as the

easiest to interpret. Indexical signs, such as the image of smog, represent a logical

connection to the idea they represent, pollution. Symbolic signs, such as a country's flag,

are the most abstract, and evoke the strongest emotional response.

First impressions can be formed in as little as 1/20th second (Sherin, 2012).

Color is a sign (Kabuto, 2009), and increases brand recognition by up to 80% (Eiseman,

2000). Color can direct the eye and can be used to create a focal point (Sherin, 2012).

Color is described by its hue (name), saturation (intensity), temperature (warmth), and

value (lightness or darkness) (Sherin, 2012). Research has shown that color effects

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consumer emotion and behavior (Sherin, 2012). According to Kucuk (2015), "color choice is a strong communication and meaning creation tool" (p. 249). Sherin (2012) concurs, stating consumers' cultural lenses effect their interpretation of color. "Color is one of the most powerful tools a designer has to communicate a client's message. It can symbolize an idea, can invoke meaning, and has cultural relevancy" (Sherin, 2012, p. 7).

In western cultures, black is often associated with death, red with danger, and their combination with pain (Kucuk, 2015). Black represents the night and is mysterious, sophisticated, dramatic, and expensive; dark grays and black are threatening and powerful, while silvery gray is futuristic and industrial (Eiseman, 2000). White is associated with pureness, cleanliness, weddings, and innocence in the U.S., while off-whites are seen as more friendly (Sherin, 2012). Bright colors attract attention; pale, pastel colors are associated with newborns, femininity, and are childish; while neutrals appeal to a sophisticated audience, and are calming or peaceful (Sherin, 2012). A color's temperature shifts its psychological impact; for example, warm beige is seen as friendlier than cool white, while cool gray is calmer than its warmer counterpart (Eiseman, 2000). A warm color (e.g., red and yellow) is seen as active and dynamic (Sherin, 2012); it elicits a measurable effect on the autonomous nervous system, stimulating consumers' appetite for consumption (Eiseman, 2000). Cool colors (e.g., blue), on the other hand, have a tranquilizing effect, eliciting a physical state of relaxation, as well as a stronger intention of desirable action, such as making a purchase or subscribing to a newsletter (Bonnardel, Piolat, & Le Bigot, 2011). Sherin (2012) found that cool colors represent confidence, quiet, and dependability; cold colors are useful to highlight subtle messages.

The human eye physically sees warm colors before cool colors (Eiseman, 2000). Dark

blue is powerful, serious, and authoritative; mid-value blue is committed and

trustworthy; while light blue is playful (Sherin, 2012). Mid-value red, on the other hand,

represents fire, blood, and danger; deep red (e.g., burgundy) is rich, refined, elegant, and

expensive (Eiseman, 2000). Orange is gregarious, energizing, and fun. Lighter shades

are sophisticated, upscale, approachable, and delicious. Yellow is luminous,

enlightening, warming, and cheerful, inspiring imagination. Creamy and warm yellows

are the most preferred shades of yellow in the U.S. Neutrals (e.g., beige, gray and taupe)

are natural, timeless, classy, and safe (e.g., non-offensive). Colors and their typical word

association in the U.S. are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. *Colors and Their Typical Word Associations for U.S. Consumers*

Hue	Association
Black	Night, mystery, sophisticated, dramatic, expensive, threatening, powerful
White	pureness, cleanliness, weddings, and innocence
Blue	constant, committed, trustworthy, inspires calm Dark blue: powerful, serious, authoritative Light blue: playful
Red	fire, blood, danger, sexy, exciting, dynamic Deep shades: rich, refined, authoritative, mature, elegancy, lush, expensive
Orange	friendly, vital, inviting energizing, not taken seriously, fun, playful, gregarious Lighter shades: sophisticated, upscale, approachable, delicious
Yellow	luminous, enlightening, warming, sunny, imagination, cheerful
Beige, Gray, Taupe	natural, timeless, classy, quality, dependability, durability, solid, enduring, classic, safe

Note. Adapted from "PANTONE Guide to Communicating with Color" by L. Eiseman, 2000, Sarasota, FL: Grafix Press Ltd. and "Design Elements: Color Fundamentals" by A. Sherin, 2012, Beverly, MA: Rockport Publishers.

Signs in an image are often dictated by the style of the photographer, and photographs often influence emotions more than words (Edgar & Rutherford, 2012). The meaning of a photograph can be constructed from two perspectives, one from which all signs presented in a photograph are interpreted at face value, and one where what the image signifies deeper organizational ideological messages about knowledge, power, truth (Bell & Davison, 2012; Stepchenkova & Zhan, 2013). The way in which consumers interpret an image is shaped by an accumulated cultural knowledge and common symbolic conventions through which the characteristics of visual communication, such as websites, are established and maintained (Bell & Davison, 2012). Bell and Davison (2012) note that these conventions help to establish the veracity of visual texts for consumers, particularly in marketing communications channels such as TV and websites (Bell & Davison, 2012).

Cultural hegemonies are created and maintained through the use of photographic images in marketing, film and television (Specht & Rutherford, 2015). These media channels are rife with visual imagery, whose persuasive power lies in the transportation of the consumer from actual reality to a perceived reality, and the difficulty of detecting whether that reality is true or false (Presi, et al., 2016). Consumer perceptions of agriculture are tied to stereotypes of a bucolic landscape (Specht & Rutherford, 2015). When confronted with more realistic images, as with Chipotle's "Farmed and Dangerous" marketing campaign, consumer perceptions can be easily swayed towards ARVA ideology from the shock value alone (Gilkerson, Swenson, & Anderson, 2016).

Consumer Reliance on Mass Media for Information

Online media is the preferred source for information by adults in the U.S. (Austin, Liu, & Jin, 2012; Yadavilli & Jones, 2014). According to Vähämaa and West (2014), consumers are more prone than ever to misinformation, partial truths, and "spin," despite an increasing ease of access to all forms of information. Yadavilli and Jones (2014) studied the impact of online advertising and publicity on consumer purchase decisions, and found that branded beef and poultry advertising positively influences total meat consumption. Farshid, Ashrafi, Wallström, & Engström (2015) noted that the internet has altered the balance of power between consumers and companies. Activists use anti-brand websites to demonstrate their dissatisfaction or anger, and to share their message with consumers (Farshid, et al., 2015). How organizations promote themselves online, then, is an increasingly critical component in brand strategy.

Influencing Brands and Policymakers

Brand Wars

Communications professionals are accustomed to dealing with attacks on their brand, which typically comes in the form of competition from other brands (Porter, 2008). For example, Chick-fil-A uses cows to encourage consumers to shun beef products, and instead "eat mor chikin" (Grauerholz, 2007). Brand attacks can develop into a full-fledged brand war (York, 2008). Highly visible examples of brand wars include Apple vs. Microsoft, Dyson vs. Hoover, Bud Light vs. Miller Light, and Time

Warner vs. Verizon (York, 2008). Perhaps the most well-known example is Coca-Cola

vs. Pepsi, who have endured more than 100 years of rivalry (Yoffie & Wang, 2004).

When rival brands attack each other, brand managers typically respond by adjusting

product options, packaging, pricing, and/or marketing strategies in order to maintain

market share (Yoffie & Wang, 2004).

Consumer Boycotts

Consumers exert power over brands with every dollar they spend, and every

dollar they withhold. When consumers attack a brand, it generally takes the form of a

boycott. Organized consumer attacks are a relatively recent phenomenon, rarely seen

prior to the 1960s (McGriff, 2012). Consumers make a personal decision to distance

themselves from specific brands due to perceived quality deficiencies and/or to protest

cultural hegemonies (Amos, Spears, & Pentina, 2014).

The 1977 boycott of Nestle´ is a common case study in business ethics

curriculum (Boyd, 2012). American critics of Nestle´ were concerned that persuading

mothers in third world countries to switch from breast milk to baby formula could cause

an increase in infant malnutrition and/or deaths (Boyd, 2012). Boycotts such as this one

are a source of power for consumers, impacting business procedures as well as

legislative policies (Klein, Smith, & John, 2004).

Anti-Consumption and Animal Rights Vegan Activism

Food is a powerful semiotic device due to its dominance in everyday life. "When we choose what to eat, we are 'communicating' meanings and projecting identities, expressing our values, beliefs and social affiliations and, in some circumstances, what we are against or what we deviate from" (Cronin, et al., 2014, p. 3). Consumers thus transform their social identities from "Veg*ns" to "Animal Rights Vegan Activists (ARVA)."

So while it is not uncommon for businesses to be aggressively competitive with each other, it is much less common for grassroots movements by consumers to attack entire industries. Gilkerson, et al. (2016) note that research on consumerism and activism typically focus on defensive communication strategies rather than offensive strategies. Despite an extensive review of the literature, no documented examples were found.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Repeated Exposure to Concepts Become Internalized

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) is a framework for understanding how consumers form and change attitudes about products and services (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). ELM describes the pathways by which a consumer processes and internalizes messages (Dunbar, et al., 2014). According to ELM, there are two routes to persuasion, central and peripheral, which often work in tandem (Dunbar, et. al., 2014; Yu & Chang, 2013). Persuasion occurs through the central route when a consumer is interested in a brand and carefully evaluates the core brand messaging; persuasion occurs via the

peripheral route when brand messaging is processed as simple inferences, source credibility or attractiveness, or emotional associations (Huertas-Garcia, Consolación, & Mas-Machuca, 2016; Haugtvedt, Leavitt, & Schneier, 1993; Mackenzie & Spreng, 1992). Persuasion through the central route is more persistent and more predictive of future behaviors (Dunbar, et. al., 2014).

Yu and Chang (2013) found that for consumers with a higher degree of brand involvement, there is a positive relationship between sympathy and message quality. Specifically, story quality is the main factor determining the brand attitude for high involvement consumers, while the brand endorser has a stronger impact on attitude for those consumers with lower brand involvement. Characteristics impacting story quality include the causal sequence of events, the degree to which readers are aware of the protagonist's psychological state, evaluative slope (e.g., rise and fall), and narrative imbalance (e.g., tension between story elements) (Escalas, 1998).

Message repetition increases message internalization, which increases both the potency and the persistence of the message persuasion (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Further, Heath (1992) found that brand messaging and organizational ideologies become widely believed because they are embedded in to stories that are repeated through interpersonal conversation and mass media.

Internalized Concepts Create Identity

In the context of marketing campaigns, message internalization is leveraged by organizations to enhance consumer brand loyalty. Tajfel and Turner (1979) developed

social identity theory as a means to explain the relationship between consumer behavior and brand loyalty (He, Li, & Harris, 2012; Kleine, Kleine, & Kernan, 1993). Social roles form the basis of consumers' social identities (Kleine, et al., 1993). Using, or avoiding, a specific brand enhances an individual's social identity (e.g., parent, BBQ pitmaster, vegan, activist), and as such can predict a connection between a consumer's self and consumer's possessions (Kleine, et al., 1993; Shirazi, et al., 2013). Consumers develop relationships with brands not only for what the product can functionally do, but also to help say something about themselves (De Chernatony, et al., 2011; Lin & Sung, 2014; Tuškej, Golob, & Podnar, 2013). Consumers are attracted to, or repelled by, products that represent particularly desirable, or undesirable, personality traits (Langer, et al., 2013). Food is a significant factor in how consumers form and express social identities (Domingo, Jewitt & Kress, 2014). Food choices aid in the projection of a desired public persona, as criteria to judge others, and to signal conformity with peer norms (Stead, McDermott, MacKintosh, & Adamson, 2011).

According to Langer, et al. (2013), social identities determine how consumers select food, react to advertising, use media, and gather information. Leveraging brand identification can be an effective tool for strengthening the consumer-organization relationship and fostering extreme brand loyalty behaviors. "Identification is simultaneously what we are and what we are not" (Kent, 2015, p. 482). In the context of "ARVAs vs. the meat industry," there is no logical "I am not a vegan" social identity. Without such an identity, the meat industry will not reap the well documented benefits of brand championship (Tuškej, Golob, & Podnar, 2013). In the U.S., the cultural norm is

to eat meat (Dhont & Hodson, 2014; Rothgerber, 2013), but this norm is not reflected in a specific social or group identity. While the coordinated attack by ARVA is on meat industry, their efforts also impact the owners and employees of organizations within and adjacent to the meat industry, as well as other consumers. There is a strong connection between belonging to a social group and a consumer's buying decisions (Langer, et al., 2013). Langer, et al. (2013) define social identification as the process by which consumers psychologically consolidates their "self" with a social group, and assimilates the main characteristics of that group, particularly attitudes, norms, and behaviors. Social groups influence consumer attitudes and behaviors, specifically as they relate to brand appraisals, self-brand connection, and intent to purchase (Thomas, Jewell, & Wiggins Johnson, 2015). Further, Andrews (1991) found that identification to voluntary groups (e.g., veg*n) is more intense, as they are actively chosen. This identification process can explain the transition from the social identity of vegan to the collective identity of animal rights vegan activist (ARVA) (Langer, et al., 2013).

Social identities are used by consumers to categorize themselves and to express who they are in a social context (Langer, et al., 2013). Social identity theory, first introduced by Tajfel and Turner in 1979, can explain how consumers come to label themselves as ARVA, as well as the passionate defense of the universal brand by some individuals in the meat industry.

Cova and D'Antone (2016) define neutralization is the process of making an idea ineffective, counteracting the idea, or nullifying it. Individuals disassociate themselves from criticisms through several accommodation practices, including appealing to a

higher loyalty ("agriculture is good"), denying damage ("we aren't doing anything wrong"), and condemning the condemners ("ARVAs are wrong") (Cova & D'Antone, 2016).

<p style="text-align: center;">*Social Identity Influences Consumer Behaviors*</p>

In a brand war, consumers are urged to favor (consume) one brand and reject (not consume) another. Anti-consumption philosophically expands upon this rejection; ethical and/or ecological considerations influence consumer actions ranging from brand selection to boycott of specific product categories (Cherrier, et. al., 2009). Cova and D'Antone (2016) define anti-consumption as an umbrella term encompassing boycotting, consumer resistance, and activism. Anti-consumption requires a deliberate and intentional choice to reject a specific product, brand, or consumer culture (Chatzidakis & Lee, 2013).

In studying anti-consumption, Chatzidakis and Lee (2013) found that consumers' "reasons against" are not always the logical opposite of the "reasons for" consumption. For example, veg*ns may avoid eating meat due to concerns about animal welfare, however it is unlikely that omnivores consume meat because they want animals to be mistreated (Chatzidakis & Lee, 2013). Cherrier (2009) studied anti-consumption practices and their role in the construction of consumer identities. She found that anti-consumption is both an activity (boycott) and an attitude (resistance). Despite the fact that resistance can be emotionally and financially costly, some consumers choose to resist the hegemonic culture. Consumers with "hero" as a social identity choose to

champion against this domination. These consumers view consumption as an exploitation of natural resources and social inequalities.

Social identities are formed by not only who consumers are (female), what they do (rescue dogs) and what they purchase (organic vegetables), but also to what groups they belong (Greenpeace). Similarly, consumers can develop group identities by what they are *not* and disidentify with groups that do not align with their self-defining issues (Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001). As such, veg*ns will be much more likely to be members of activist groups than their non-veg*n counterparts.

Group Identity Influences Consumer Behaviors

Anti-consumption is gaining a foothold in Western societies (Cova & D'Antone, 2016), and is commonly cultivated in vegan activist groups (Chatzidakis & Lee, 2013). Consumers have socially-mediated preferences; they prefer those beliefs that are liked and are considered reasonable by their peers, whether virtual or real (Vähämaa & West, 2014). Group membership mediates individual likes and dislikes to shape belief systems and thus become platforms of social and cultural knowledge (Vähämaa & West, 2014). Blackwood and Louis (2012) found this shared, or collective, identity of anti-consumers is a major factor of participation in collective action. Van Zomeren, et al. (2012) define collective action as any behavior that is enacted as a representative of the group, and which is aimed at improving the group's conditions. Collective action behaviors can range from signing a petition to participating in protest demonstrations (van Zomeren, et al., 2012).

Social identity has informed much of the research on consumer participation in collective action, and justifies consumer participation in collective action despite considerable personal costs and skepticism about the ability to fully achieve collective goals (Blackwood & Louis, 2012; Hornsey, et al., 2006). For example, these consumers may consider boycotts successful even if the targeted company's overall sales were not impacted, as the collective action drew public attention to the issues important to them. Thus, both self-identity and group-identity are nurtured through collective action. "The concept of communal resistance is a powerful signifier of collective identity whereby consumers have the cooperative ability to challenge given societal rules, counteract market-led norms and tastes and establish their own through their consumption choices, processes and practices" (Cronin, McCarthy, & Collins, 2014, p. 3). Nine of the 14 participants in Cronin, et al.'s (2014) study self-identified as veg*n. These participants believed themselves to be highly ag literate and "engaged in considerable discourse with each other about how such issues as animal cruelty within the food industry, the injustices of 'supermarket bought meat,' modern production and processing, marketing, corporate greed, and passive consumption all serve to protract an unjust and insipid mainstream culture" (p. 12).

Bouillé, Basso, and Demontrond (2016) explored the process of recruitment of 'ordinary' consumers into activist groups. They found that consumers are first invited to learn about the issues, and then encouraged through emotional appeals to alter their purchasing practices so as to line up with the group's ideology. "These collective responses cover a vast range of objectives and approaches (e.g. defending consumers,

promoting alternative forms of consumption such as slow food and encouraging

'deconsumption') and in some cases target the effective transformation of commercial

practices through actions taken directly on the market" (Bouillé, et al., 2016, p. 82).

Consumer boycotts are a form of anti-consumption behavior, where boycotters

are market activists who forgo the consumption of certain products and services because

of environmental, political, ethical, or social issues (Chatzidakis & Lee 2013). The

increasing use of the internet and social media by consumers has enhanced the ability of

boycott organizers to reach a far greater audience and at a far greater speed (Makarem &

Jae, 2016). The boycotters of SeaWorld, for example, have been able to reach millions

of additional consumers by encouraging supporters to share posts on Facebook, Twitter,

and online blogs (Makarem & Jae, 2016).

According to the social identity model of collective action (SICMA), group

identity can motivate collective action (van Zomeren, et al., 2008). Group-based anger

towards perceived injustice, politicized group identities, and belief in group efficacy

strongly predict collective action (van Zomeren, et al., 2008). Van Zomeren, et al. (2012)

found that absolute stances on moral issues predicted both collective action intentions

and collective action, as violations of a moral conviction motivate the individuals who

hold them to actively change that situation. Vegan activists have successfully leveraged

collective action into both social and political successes, as evidenced by the increasing

number of vegan options available to consumers in restaurants and grocery stores

nationwide, as well as significant regulatory changes in states such as California and

Ohio (Mercy For Animals, n.d.).

In the context of food, anti-consumption is not possible. Vegan activists espouse redirected or alternative consumption, or what Sheth, Sethia, and Srinivas (2011) refer to as mindful consumption (MC). "Mindful consumption is premised on consciousness in thought and behavior about consequences of consumption. MC also assumes that one is in a position to choose what and how much one consumes; this means that one is not forced or limited by one's circumstances or market conditions to consume in a certain way, e.g., being forced to curtail consumption; rather, the consumer makes a conscious choice about consumption according to his or her values and preference" (p. 27). Mindful consumption is both an activity and an attitude, and recognizes that some level of consumption, particularly as it relates to food, is necessary (Sheth, et al., 2011). Within ARVA ideology, the issue is not the amount of consumption, but rather the nature of what is used or consumed.

Mitigating the Impacts of Collective Action

Since McGuire first introduced inoculation theory in the 1960s, which posits that attitude change can be resisted in the face of counterattitudinal influences, considerable research has been done to apply the theory to proactive crisis communications strategies (Einwiller & Johar, 2013). Exposure to advertising narratives that contains a weak attack against a brand, followed by counterarguments in support of the brand, stimulates loyal consumers to actively defend their beliefs (Einwiller & Johar, 2013; Kim, 2012). Additionally, these narratives immunize consumers from the harmful effects on brand attitude by future negative messaging about that brand (Einwiller & Johar, 2013; Kim,

2012). Niedereppe et al. (2015) found that inoculation messages within narratives increase counterarguments to anti-attitudinal messages, thereby reducing the negative persuasive effect of the attack. Further, they found that narratives reduce counterarguments to pro-attitudinal messages.

Einwiller and Johar (2013) found that consumer's social identities play a moderating role in the intensity of resistance to brand attacks. Niedereppe et al. (2015) found that disidentifiers (consumers with "that it is not me" identities) are motivated to process the inoculation to reinforce their negative views. Exposure to counterarguments actually reduces the persuasive effect of the inoculating threat message (Einwiller & Johar, 2013; Niedereppe, et al., 2015). Further, Ivanov et al. (2016) found that the combination of inoculation and supportive messages within narratives push consumers in the message-advocated direction and protect these attitudinal gains over time – even for consumers with initially neutral or opposing attitudes. "Public attitudes have a significant role in determining how people behave both as consumers and as citizens. This, in turn, affects the commercial viability and even the sustainability of animal industries. Furthermore, public attitudes about animal welfare are often based on limited knowledge, and the public's beliefs are largely acquired from the mass media, perhaps filtered by opinion leaders" (Coleman, 2010, p. 80).

It is by examining the relationship of these theories that we can best understand the reasons why consumers believe and behave in the ways that they do, as well as the most effective strategies for protecting brands long-term (promote pro-identities/mitigate anti-identities) can be developed (Figure 1).
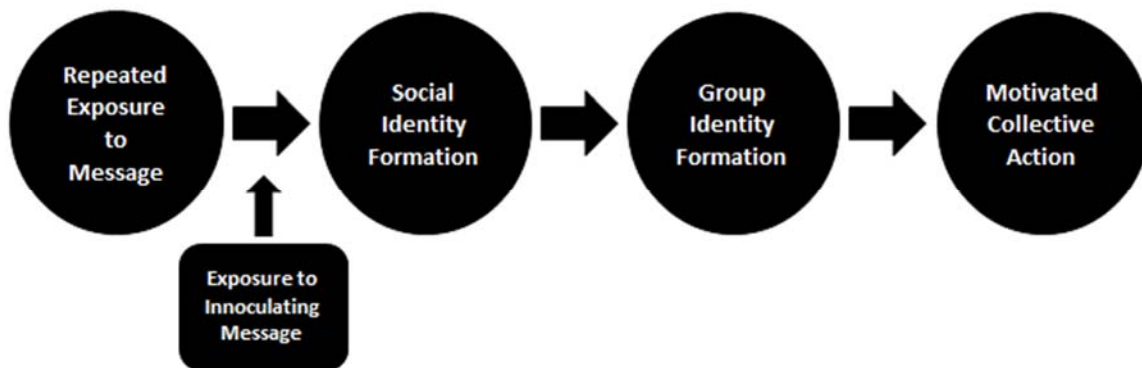
Figure 1. Conceptual model of the process in which repeated exposure to messages leads to consumers taking collective action.

Adapted from Petty & Cacioppo (1986), Tajfel & Turner (1979), Vähämaa & West (2014), Van Zomeren, et al. (2012), and Einwiller & Johar (2013).

Summary of the Literature

A review of the literature illustrates how organizations influence consumer attitudes and behaviors. Language creates, not just reflects, one's reality. Do we harvest and process our crop, or do we murder and dismember it? Words are powerful tools for communication. Organizations weave words into stories. Consumers process these stories emotionally rather than analytically. Stories make products and concepts meaningful to consumers' lives. Organizations also communicate with consumers visually. The meanings and interpretations of images, signs, and symbols are social constructs, shaped by cultural knowledge and conventions.

A review of the literature also illustrates how consumers influence organizations and policymakers. Consumers exert their power over brands with every dollar they spend. When consumers attack a brand, it generally takes the form of a boycott. Boycotts influence change of business procedures and legislative policies. It is highly unusual for

organized grassroots movements to attack an entire industry. Despite an extensive review of the literature, no documented examples were found.

Elaboration likelihood model explains how repeated exposure to concepts become internalized. Social identity theory explains how these internalized concepts create consumer identity. Consumers with like social identities from a common group identity. This group identity further influences consumer behaviors. The inoculation theory of resistance to influence shows the impacts of collective action can be mitigated. This study focuses on the first part of this framework.

Need for Study

Consumer-brand identification has a significant impact on consumer buying decisions (Chang, Hsieh, & Tseng, 2013; De Chernatony, et al., 2011; Tuškej, Golob, & Podnar, 2013). Yet there are gaps in both consumer behavior and branding literature on how consumer-brand identification impacts brand championship (He, et al., 2012; Lin & Sung, 2014; Tuškej, Golob, & Podnar, 2013). Further, Lin and Sung (2014) assert that "Given the utility of brand identity fusion in predicting prorelationship behaviors, more empirical research is needed to elucidate the nature and effects of brand identity fusion on the dynamics of consumer-brand relationships across different brands and product categories" (p. 65). Extant consumer research mainly focuses on cognitions and reasons that explain performing a given behavior, despite the fact that the reasons against performing that same behavior may be qualitatively different (Chatzidakis & Lee, 2013). Anti-consumption research focuses on consumer belief systems that rally against the

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acquisition and use of specific goods, however there is scant research on the impact of anti-consumption against an entire industry (Chatzidakis & Lee, 2013).

Many studies have identified a need for further research. Chatzidakis and Lee (2013) suggest the need for a study of how organizations engage with anti-consumerist attitudes and behaviors. "Instances of anti-consumption such as brand boycotts and other related actions against a brand require researchers to examine the phenomenon from the consumer perspective" (Cova & D'Antone, 2016). Einwiller and Johar (2013) suggest that research is needed to shed more light on the underlying processes that lead to inoculation effectiveness among anti-consumers. Compton, Jackson, & Dimmock (2016) noted that much of the extant research on inoculation has been focused on print messages. They suggest that future studies need a better understanding of how inoculation fares with attacks in interpersonal contexts assess inoculation's efficacy in other mediums, such as online media. Niedereppe et al. (2015) suggest that future studies should consider the impacts on resistance by language intensity, language controllingness (e.g., use of imperatives) and including literary devices, such as metaphors, and other affect-inducing or hedonically evocative forms of language use. This study addresses American Association for Agricultural Education's 2016-2020 National Research Agenda, Research Priority 1: Public and Policy Maker Understanding of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Findings and recommendations from this study can be used by organizations to improve message formats and strategies, thereby better informing consumers and policymakers about agriculture-related issues.

Purpose and Objectives

Given the ever-escalating disconnect between consumers and food production, it is important to understand how pro- and anti-meat ideologies are communicated to consumers. How is the meat industry maintaining the cultural norm of meat consumption? How can we explain ARVA's demonstrated success in swaying public opinion and changing political climate? The purpose of this study was to explore how pro- and anti-meat consumption organizations communicate, reinforce, and advance their ideology online to actively shape public opinion. Research was guided by the following objectives:

> RO1. Identify the textual strategies that pro- and anti-meat consumption organizations use.
>
> RO2. Identify the narrative strategies that pro- and anti-meat consumption organizations use.
>
> RO3. Identify the semiotic cues that pro- and anti-meat consumption organizations use.
>
> R04. Compare the communication strategies between pro- and anti-meat consumption organizations to determine if, and how, the approaches differ.

The study remained rooted in the marketing, social, and economic implications of anti-consumption attacks on an industry. No attempt was made to answer the larger philosophical question of whether or not people should consume animals.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

The purpose of this study was to explore how pro- and anti-meat consumption organizations communicate, reinforce, and advance their ideology online to actively shape public opinion. Research was guided by the following objectives: identify the textual strategies that pro- and anti-meat consumption organizations use (RO1), identify the narrative strategies that pro- and anti-meat consumption organizations use (RO2), identify the semiotic cues that pro- and anti-meat consumption organizations use (RO3), and compare the communication strategies between pro- and anti-meat consumption organizations to determine if, and how, the approaches differ (RO4).

Research Design

A multi-phase content analysis was used to explore the specific techniques used by organizations to reinforce and/or advance their ideology in the public sphere. Content analysis is a systematic, replicable technique most known for compressing large amounts of text into content categories based on explicit rules of coding (Krippendorff, 1989). Content analysis is particularly useful for evaluating mass communication campaigns, and provide a comprehensive evaluation when both words and images are analyzed (Hughes, et al., 2016). Fraenkel and Wallen (2012) note that content analysis can be used to show how different organizations handle the same phenomena differently, as well as to infer the values and ideologies of those organizations. Using content analysis

can provide new insights in the understanding of a particular phenomenon (Krippendorff, 2013). Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected.

The study remained rooted in the marketing, social, and economic implications of anti-consumption attacks on an industry. No attempt was made to answer the larger philosophical question of whether or not people should consume animals.

Sampling

Purposive sampling was used for this study. National organizations whose mission was strongly tied to animal consumption and whose activities included both education and marketing were reviewed. Farm Animal Rights Movement (FARM), Mercy For Animals (MFA), and People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) were selected to represent vegan activist organizations. These organizations promote alternative consumption (the transition to a vegan diet) and specifically target producers and processors of cattle, swine, and poultry. Other organizations were eliminated from selection due to marketing efforts focused more exclusively on promoting the rights of household animals, such as the Humane Society of the United States, or due to promoting acts of eco-terrorism, such as the Animal Liberation Front. Three major meat commodity organizations were selected to represent the meat industry: National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), National Pork Board (NPB), and U.S. Poultry & Egg Association (USPEA). Each of these national organizations provides direction for their members in marketing and advocacy efforts.

Farm Animal Rights Movement (FARM) advocates for the animals through public awareness campaigns using graphic video footage, vegan support programs and "activating people who are concerned about animal abuse, environmental devastation, and threats to public health" (http://www.farmusa.org/index.php/who-we-are/our-mession-and-values.html). The organization is based in Bethesda, Maryland.

Mercy For Animals (MFA) is based in Los Angeles, California. The organization "is dedicated to preventing cruelty to farmed animals and promoting compassionate food choices and policies" (http://www.mercyforanimals.org/about). According to MFA website, programs include undercover operations, legal advocacy, corporate outreach, and education.

According to the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) website, PETA "is the largest animal rights organization in the world" (http://www.peta.org/about-peta). Their activities include public education, cruelty investigations, legislation, and protest campaigns. PETA is based in Norfolk, Virginia.

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) has offices in Denver and Washington, D.C., and is the marketing organization and trade association for cattle farmers and ranchers. NCBA coordinates state and national efforts to build demand for beef, and advocates for the cattle industry's policy positions and economic interests. "NCBA works to encourage the humane treatment of farm animals, the wise stewardship of natural resources and the implementation of good husbandry practices" (http://www.beefusa.org/theassociation.aspx).

The National Pork Producers Council (NPPC) has offices in Des Moines, Iowa and Washington, D.C., and supports the pork industry through research, promotion, and education. NPPC works "to do what's right for people, pigs and the planet" (http://www.pork.org/about-us).

The U.S. Poultry & Egg Association (USPEA) is based in Georgia and represents producers and processors of broilers, turkeys, ducks, eggs, and breeding stock, as well as allied companies. USPEA serves its poultry and egg members through research, education, communications and technical services. The association strives to "promote responsible practices in animal care and environmental stewardship" (www.uspoultry.org/about).

Data Collection

Many consumers use mass media content as the primary source of information regarding science, health, and environmental issues (Dahlstrom, 2014). These consumers are dependent on others to inform and help them interpret information about issues outside the realm of their direct experience, like agriculture (Dahlstrom, 2014). Further, most marketing efforts focus on driving traffic to website content, as every website visitor is an opportunity for generating consumer engagement that ideally results in purchases (Crestodina, n.d.).

Institutional websites are an important semiotic space not only where information is exchanged, but also where various discourses and ideologies are created and mobilized through multimodal (language, visual elements, and so forth) semiotic designs

(Kress, 2010; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001; Michelson & Valencia, 2016). "Given their broad audience and relative ease of dissemination, new media sources, such as websites, blogs, and YouTube channels, are fertile ground for the proliferation of ideological groups and their messages" (Dunbar, et al., 2014, p. 872). Website features (such as the navigation menu, interactivity, privacy policy, links to external sites, and third-party endorsements) have just as much influence on web searchers as they do on web surfers (Dunbar, et al., 2014).

Extant research has focused extensively on website usability standards, and relatively little on its graphic design, or atmospherics. Usability experts emphasize website functionality; users experience higher levels of trust, loyalty and satisfaction with websites that feature good visual design (Bonnardel, Piolat, & Le Bigot, 2011). Dailey (2004) defines web atmospherics "as the conscious designing of web environments to create positive effects (e.g., positive affect, positive cognitions, etc.) in users in order to increase favorable consumer responses (e.g. site revisiting, browsing, etc.)" (p. 796). Users tend to scan, rather than read, web pages (Nielsen, 1994). Further, users are more likely to stay on pages longer when presented with concise and eye-catching content (Sherwin, 2014). Users desire the most important information to be displayed above the fold, to minimize the necessity of scrolling (Sherwin, 2014).

In studying how public opinion is influenced, it is important to view websites as a consumer would. Two of the three commodities, National Cattlemen's Beef Association and National Pork Board, have checkoff programs for consumer marketing that fund consumer-oriented websites. The third, U.S. Poultry & Egg Association, does

not. Content on the NCBA's beefitswhatsfordinner.com, NPB's porkbeinspired.com, and USPEA's uspoultry.org were mined for data. This content was contrasted to that on the websites of FARM's farmusa.org, MFAs' mercyforanimals.org, and PETA's peta.org, to illuminate if, or to what extent, the messaging strategies differ.

According to Nielsen (2002), "The homepage is the most important page on most websites, and gets more page views than any other page." The primary goals of a homepage are to provide useful information, tell users the site's purpose, and to provide top-level navigation to invite users to explore additional information inside the site (Nielsen, 2013). Most consumers are unlikely to look past the first few pages of a website (Lowry, Wilson, & Haig, 2014). As such, only the homepage content of the organizations' websites was examined in this study, specifically the text, visual elements, and navigation. Data were captured on February 6, 2017 and February 7, 2017. As website content is frequently updated, screenshots were taken of the websites to ensure coders saw identical versions of the homepages. These screenshots are provided in Appendix A.

In order to achieve RO1: Identify the Textual Strategies that Pro- and Meat-Meat Consumption Organizations Use to Reinforce and/or Advance their Ideology in the Public Sphere, data was comprised of headlines, sentences, and the phrases used in navigation and button links. In order to achieve RO2: Identify the Narrative Strategies that Pro- and Anti-Meat Consumption Organizations Use to Reinforce and/or Advance their Ideology in the Public Sphere, data was comprised of paragraph text. In order to achieve RO3: Identify the Semiotic Cues that that Pro- and Anti-Meat Consumption

Organizations Use to Reinforce and/or Advance their Ideology in the Public Sphere, data was comprised of color schemes and photographic images. In order to achieve R04: Compare the Communication Strategies between Pro- and Anti-Meat Consumption Organizations to Determine if, and How, the Approaches Differ, data was comprised of frequencies, percentages, and ordering of each communication strategy collected in RO1-RO3.

Only the websites of the sample were investigated, not the organizations or their members themselves. The study remained rooted in the marketing, social, and economic implications of anti-consumption attacks on an industry. No attempt was made to answer the larger philosophical question of whether or not people should consume animals.

Multimodal Data Coding and Analysis

Organizations use a variety of modes (e.g., text, images, and color) on their websites to communicate with consumers (Kress, 2010). Due to the multimodal nature of the data to be collected in this study, a combination of approaches was used in coding and analysis: critical discourse analysis, persuasive narrative, and semiotics. Following Freire (2014), both syntagmatic and paradigmatic identitary values were coded and analyzed for each website. The syntagmatic content is the words and images that are directly accessible to the naked eye or ear (e.g., the number of times the word "meat" appears). The paradigmatic content refers to the meaning underlying what is said or shown (e.g., references to "meat" as a positive or negative object).

The principal investigator and two peers independently reviewed and analyzed each website's home page. According to Krippendorff (2013), in order to build reliability and trustworthiness, "coders must have appropriate backgrounds and their qualifications must be shared by the larger population of possible coders" (p. 128-9). The coders in this study represent differing genders, age generations, dietary regimes, and professional experiences. Coders were trained to identify defined characteristics of the website content, such as type of narrative plot, persuasive appeal, color palette, and image composition. Halliday's (1985) metafunctions of language was considered during textual coding, such as the use of cultural themes, referring expressions, modality markers, and illocutionary markers. Kress (2010) and van Leeuwen's (2005) semiotic accounts were considered during visual coding, such as the use of symbolic images, size and distance, perspective angles, and visual compositions. Following Edgar and Rutherford (2012) and Weber (1990), coding sheets were compared with differences reconciled via negotiations. Each homepage was qualitatively analyzed on an individual basis; emergent themes were identified. Comparisons across homepages were done quantitatively. Frequencies, percentages, and ordering of data collected in RO1-RO3 are presented in the findings section. Coding instructions are included in Appendix D.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Discourse conventions are a very effective method of studying cultural hegemonies (Fairclough, 2013). Pragmatics, a sub-field of linguistics, looks at meanings in context, and in particular at how the identities and relationships between speakers

influence linguistic choices and interpretations (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015). A critical discourse analysis (CDA), using the tools of pragmatics, was employed to examine textual content at both the word and paragraph levels to determine how each organization uses language to sustain, or undermine, the hegemonic concept of meat.

In order to achieve RO1: Identify the textual strategies that pro- and anti-meat consumption organizations use, headlines, paragraph text, and navigational links were examined for perspective, voice, transitivity, persuasive appeal, and illocution. Perspective refers to the use of pronouns (e.g., I, we, you, he, and they), and is used to created intimacy or distance between the organization and the consumer (Stern, 1997). Textual units were coded as first, second or third person perspective. Voice describes the use of active or passive verbiage, and is used to frame perceived responsibility (Bohner, 2001) or create immediacy (Stern, 1997). Textual units were coded as active or passive voice. Transitivity refers to foregrounding and backgrounding of information, particularly through the use of personification, euphemisms, the downplaying of negative actions, and dysphemisms, the exaggeration of negative qualities (Moore, 2014). Persuasive appeals are used to influence consumer purchasing decisions or support of a cause. These appeals speak to an individual's need, wants, or interests. Persuasive appeals are based on Aristotle's tools of rhetoric: pathos, logos, and ethos; that is, appeals may be emotional, rational or ethical (Johar & Sirgy, 1991). As opposed to locution, what is said, illocutions are the intent of words used in text; analysis specifically focus on perlocutions and implicature (Grice, 1975; Halliday, 1985). Perlocutions direct the audience to take specific action. Textual units were coded as

containing, or not containing, a directive. Implicature is the implied meaning in indirect speech. Each homepage was qualitatively analyzed on an individual basis using the constant comparative method; emergent themes were identified.

Persuasive Narratives

Dahlstrom (2014) noted that narratives can rarely be countered with facts with any effectiveness, and that mass media content is biased toward narrative formats. Almost any type of branding message can be expressed within a story context (Kent, 2015). Kent (2015) described 20 master plots: quest, adventure, pursuit, rescue, escape, revenge, riddle/mystery, rivalry, underdog, temptation, metamorphosis, transformation, maturation, love, forbidden love, sacrifice, discovery, wretched excess, and rise and fall. See Appendix B for a description of each plot. Kent (2015) identified nine of these plots are most suitable for use in stories about animal and environmental ideologies: discovery, love, maturation, rescue, sacrifice, temptation/greed, transformation, underdog, wretched excess. In order to achieve RO2: Identify the narrative strategies that pro- and anti-meat consumption organizations use, paragraph texts were analyzed. Narratives were examined to identify which of the master plots in this subset, if any, is being used by the organizations' storytellers to advance their ideology.

Narratives in paragraph text were also examined for the existence of inoculating messages. While inoculation messages can have an immediate persuasive effect, their primary purpose is to promote resistance to subsequent oppositional messages (Niederdeppe, et al., 2015). The inoculation process is comprised of two components:

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threat/attack and counterargument (Ivanov, et al., 2016). The existence of any pro- and anti-meat messages discovered in RO1 within oppositional narratives would serve as evidence of the use of inoculation as a communication strategy. Each homepage was qualitatively analyzed on an individual basis using the constant comparative method; emergent themes were identified.

<center>Semiotics</center>

Semiotic methodology focuses on meanings of images as "signs," and the relationships between these signs (Chandler, 1994). Websites influence consumers through their visual design, including navigational placement, images and icons, colors, and text (Chang, 2012; Lowry, et al., 2014). In the present study, color palettes and photographic images were examined to achieve RO3: Identify the semiotic cues that pro- and anti-meat consumption organizations use. Kress (2010) and van Leeuwen's (2005) semiotic accounts were considered during visual coding, such as the use of symbolic images, size and distance, perspective angles, and visual compositions.

Consumers are up to 78% more likely to remember colored text than text in black and white (Eiseman, 2000). Dominant colors generally elicit consistent responses (Eiseman, 2000). See Table 2 for a list of colors and their typical responses, and the expected impact of color combinations. These guidelines were referenced during color analysis. Hue, saturation, value, and temperature of the primary, secondary, and accent colors used on the websites were coded. Color palettes were also evaluated from a connotative (implied meaning) perspective.

Following Abrams and Meyers (2012) and Michelson and Valencia (2016), the examination of photographic images focused on the salience of carriers of connotation, such as subject, setting, prominence, and perspective. Following Edgar and Rutherford (2012) and Stepchenkova and Zhan (2013), images were evaluated from a denotative (face value) and connotative (implied meaning) perspective. Bell and Davison (2012) noted that it is through these implied meanings that consumers construct cultural notions of truth. Following Presi, Maehle, and Kleppe (2016), coders first examined image denotation, making an inventory-like list of image content. This process was followed by logging word associations and describing the emotive content. The principles of photographic composition (e.g., lines, lighting, rule of thirds, and depth of field) were considered in explaining how the photographic image conveys emphasis and emotion (Presi, Maehle, & Kleppe, 2016). A holistic analysis of both webpage color palettes and photographic images examined how these elements are used to express each organization's ideology. Each homepage was qualitatively analyzed on an individual basis using the constant comparative method; emergent themes were identified.

Comparison of Organizational Messaging Strategies

Comparisons across homepages were quantitatively analyzed using IBM SPSS to achieve R04: Compare the communication strategies between pro- and anti-meat consumption organizations to determine if, and how, the approaches differ. Frequencies, percentages, and ordering of data collected in RO1-RO3 are presented in the finding section.

Trustworthiness

The rigor of qualitative research is established through trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The concepts of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are the foundations for trustworthiness. Following Elo, et al. (2014), trustworthiness was established through the use of an evaluatory checklist during each phase of the study. Adequate reflection on the checklist questions ensured that each of the foundations for trustworthiness were met. Answers to the questions were recorded in the research journal. The checklist is presented in Appendix E.

Triangulation was used to ensure credibility, the accurate identification and description of data. Homepages in the sample were examined using (1) three investigators; (2) three analytical approaches, and (3) three theoretical approaches.

As website content is frequently updated, screenshots of each webpage were captured prior to analysis. Data were captured on February 6, 2017 and February 7, 2017. These screenshots are included in Appendix A to address dependability, the stability of data over time and under different conditions. Additionally, peer debriefing was used to ensure that researcher biases are not reflected in the findings.

Confirmability, the potential for objectivity about the data's accuracy, relevance, or meaning, and reliability in this study was ensured by the use of three coders. The coders in this study represent differing genders, age generations, dietary regimes, and professional experiences. Krippendorff's alpha was computed to ensure that coding between coders is reliable. This reliability coefficient was selected because it enables researchers to judge a variety of data (e.g., number of observers, metrics of

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measurement, sample size) with the same reliability standard (Krippendorff, 2011). The goal was to surpass .70 for agreement (De Swert, 2012; Lombard, Snyder-Duch, & Bracken, 2002; Mager & Helgeson, 2011). Coder ratings were entered into IBM SPSS. For RO1, the smallest number of textual units in a site was 31. The random number generator in Microsoft Excel was used to select 12 textual units for analysis. K ALPHA came in at .7694, greater than the critical value set a priori for this study. Therefore, coding and interrater reliability are considered trustworthy. For RO2, the smallest number of paragraph units in a site was seven. The first seven paragraph units of each site were analyzed. K ALPHA came in at .7289, greater than the critical value set a priori for this study. Therefore, coding and interrater reliability are considered trustworthy. RO3, any differences in color coding were resolved via negotiation. Differences in monitor settings can alter a color's perceived hue, value, saturation, and temperature. During initial coding, color A and color B may have been designated as primary and secondary by one coder, while another coder designated these colors in reverse order. All color palettes were consistent between coders. The smallest number of photographic images in a site was seven. The first seven photographic images of each site were analyzed. K ALPHA came in at .7450, greater than the critical value set a priori for this study. Therefore, coding and interrater reliability are considered trustworthy.

Transferability to other settings or populations is established through the use of thick, rich descriptions and a transparent research process that is documented in detail in a research journal.

Assumptions and Limitations

I am assuming that the images were intentionally selected by the organization. I am assuming that the websites were created by a communications professional who understands branding, as well as best practices for marketing and website design. Not every meat commodity was sampled. Strategies used by fish, sheep, honey, silk, or other meat commodity organizations may differ.

Summary of the Methods

The purpose of this study was to explore how pro- and anti-meat consumption organizations communicate, reinforce, and advance their ideology online to actively shape public opinion. A multi-phase content analysis was used to explore the specific textual, narrative, and semiotic strategies used by organizations to reinforce and/or advance their ideology in the public sphere. Headlines, paragraph text, and navigational links were evaluated for perspective, voice, transitivity, persuasive appeal, and illocution. Narratives in paragraph text were evaluated for the presence of a master plot and for the presence of inoculating messages. Color palettes were evaluated for denotative and connotative content, particularly focusing on hue, saturation, value, and temperature of the primary, secondary, and accent. Photographic images were evaluated for denotative and connotative content, particularly focusing on subject, setting, prominence, and perspective. Data were captured on February 6, 2017 and February 7, 2017. Each homepage was qualitatively analyzed on an individual basis using the

constant comparative method; emergent themes were identified. Comparisons across

homepages were done quantitatively analyzed using IBM SPSS.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS/RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to explore how pro- and anti-meat consumption organizations communicate, reinforce, and advance their ideology online to actively shape public opinion. Denotative data from homepages are summarized in the tables. Important and connotative findings for each organization are described in text.

RO1: Identify the Textual Strategies that Pro- and Anti-Meat Consumption Organizations Use

Headlines, paragraph text, and navigation texts were coded for perspective, voice, transitivity, persuasive appeal, perlocution, and connotative (implied) impact. Data consisted of 410 textual units.

FARM and NCBA preferred perspective strategy is second person; MFA, PETA, NPPC, and USPEA preferred third person perspective. A summary of textual perspective use is provided in Table 3.

Table 3. *Summary of Textual Perspective Usage on Pro- and Anti-Meat Organization Homepages*

Site	n	1st Person	2nd Person	3rd Person
FARM	31	10	16	5
MFA	38	12	11	16
PETA	166	12	53	101
NCBA	44	1	24	19
NPPC	66	1	12	42
USPEA	64	1	21	42

The preferred strategy for all organizations in this sample is active voice. A summary of textual voice use is provided in Table 4.

Table 4. *Summary of Textual Voice Usage on Pro- and Anti-Meat Organization Homepages*

Site	n	Active	Passive
FARM	31	29	2
MFA	38	28	10
PETA	166	120	46
NCBA	44	39	5
NPPC	66	66	0
USPEA	64	64	0

Transitivity was identified in roughly half of all textual units. A summary of transitivity use is provided in Table 5.

Table 5. *Summary of Transitivity Usage on Pro- and Anti-Meat Organization Homepages*

Site	n	Fore/Backgrounding	None
FARM	31	14	17
MFA	38	19	19
PETA	166	80	86
NCBA	44	24	20
NPPC	66	16	50
USPEA	64	24	40

Most textual units did not contain a persuasive appeal. When used, FARM, MFA, PETA, NCBA, and NPPC preferred emotional appeals, while USPEA preferred rational appeals. A summary of persuasive appeal use is provided in Table 6.

Table 6. *Summary of Persuasive Appeal Usage on Pro- and Anti-Meat Organization Homepages*

Site	n	Emotional	Rational	Ethical	None
FARM	31	8	5	0	18
MFA	38	11	4	4	19
PETA	166	67	8	1	90
NCBA	44	8	4	2	30
NPPC	66	5	2	0	59
USPEA	64	3	19	1	41

Use of textual perlocution as a preferred strategy was mixed. Roughly half of textual units on the FARM, MFA, and NCBA homepages used directives. Roughly a third of textual units on the PETA, NPPC, and USPEA homepages used directives. A summary of textual perlocution use is provided in Table 7.

Table 7. *Summary of Textual Perlocution Usage on Pro- and Anti-Meat Organization Homepages*

Site	n	Directive	None
FARM	31	17	14
MFA	38	16	22
PETA	166	55	111
NCBA	44	22	22
NPPC	66	12	54
USPEA	64	18	46

Perspective, Voice, Transitivity, Persuasive Appeal, and Perlocution

Farm Animal Rights Movement

FARM's use of primarily first (32.2%, n=10) and second (51.6%, n=16) person perspective creates an intimacy between the consumer and the organization, as shown in Table 3. The extensive use of active voice (93.5%, n=29) further engages the consumer, as shown in Table 4. Transitivity was identified in 45.2% (n=14) of all textual units. A summary of transitivity use is provided in Table 5. The majority of textual units (58.1%, n=18) contain no persuasive appeal, as shown in Table 6. Emotional appeals are present in 25.8% (n=8) of textual units; rational appeals are present in 16.1% (n=5) of units. No ethical appeals are used. Only half of headlines (n=10) contain an appeal, while 80% (n=8) of paragraphs contain an appeal. No persuasive appeals are used in navigation. All but one navigational link (n=10) is a directive, as shown in Table 7. Two of the four news headlines were directives.

The phrases "Saving Animals," "Activating Compassion," and "Raising Awareness" on rotating banner at top of homepage informs consumers of the

organization's activities; the dynamic coding reinforces the concept of constant action by the organization.

FARM attempts to undermine the hegemonic concept of meat through the purposeful use of emotionally charged words, contrasting the concepts of abuse, devastation, and threats to nurturing, safeguarding, and compassion.

"Farm Animal Rights Movement (FARM) is on the frontlines of building a kinder and more just world, where animals are no longer raised or killed for food." (FARM8)

FARM relies heavily on the use of dysphemisms, the exaggeration of negative qualities, to reinforce the theme of cruelty versus compassion. They liken their activities to war through the use military metaphors: FARM is fighting a battle for the rights of animals. FARM is leading the charge, and activates budding vegans, like sleeper agents, to join the fight for their cause.

"We advocate for animals through massive eye-opening public awareness initiatives, cutting-edge grassroots campaigns, and movement-building programs that nurture both aspiring vegans and budding activists. We believe in the inherent worth of animals and in preventing animal cruelty, protecting the environment, and safeguarding public health." (FARM9)

Consumers can be heroes even without enlisting; furthering the cause through ongoing financial support. Prominently displayed above the fold, consumers are urged to "Become a FARM Animal Hero with your contribution today" (FARM24). This is a much more pore powerful than the directive "DONATE" (FARM1) at the top of the

page. Caught up in the textual imagery, consumers may imagine a tickertape parade in their honor or the awarding of a medal by the president upon clicking "submit." However, it is unclear how the money is actually spent.

Some textual units are deceptive, such as "We're hiring for our 10 Billion Lives campaign! Hit the road & start #SavingAnimals in February!" (FARM19). The word "hiring" implies FARM will pay consumers to save animals, yet this is a call to action for volunteers. The use of "campaign" and the unfathomable "10 billion lives" also ties in to the military metaphor.

The organization connotes legitimacy in the prominently displayed textual unit FARM10, "We are a 501(c)3 non-profit organization based in Washington, DC. We conduct our programs through our dedicated team of movement leaders, nearly two dozen staffers and a network of thousands of volunteers." This association with the government, as well as the reference to the large size of their organization, connotes mainstream legitimacy.

Mercy For Animals

MFA's use of perspective is relatively balanced, with 31.6% (n=12) of textual units written in first person, 28.9% (n=11) of textual units in second person, and 42.1% (n=16) of textual units in third person, as shown in Table 3. Most (73%, n=28) textual units use active voice, as shown in Table 4. Transitivity was identified in half (n=19) of all textual units. A summary of transitivity use is provided in Table 5. Half of MFA's textual units contain no persuasive appeal, 29% (n=11) of units use an emotional appeal, 10.5% (n=4) use a rational appeal, and 10.5% (n=4) use an ethical appeal, as shown in

Table 6. Less than half (42.1%, n=16) of MFA's navigational links contain a directive; while 57.9% (n=22) do not (see Table 7). Most (60%, n=15) of headlines are third person, but use a persuasive appeal (73.3%). More than half (58.3%, n=12) of paragraph units contain a persuasive appeal. No navigational links (n=11) contain a persuasive appeal, and only 54.5% (n=6) contain a directive.

MFA attempts to undermine the hegemonic concept of meat by contrasting the concepts of cruelty and compassion. Messages state either "the meat industry is secretly abusing animals" or "compassionate people do not consume meat." Active voice and persuasive appeals strongly reinforce this messaging. From the large "Exposing Cruelty" (MFA4) at the top of the homepage to the "Uncover Operations" (MFA23) link, MFA reinforces this cruelty versus compassion theme. Specific, emotionally charged examples of the evils of animal production are presented, such as "Breaking: Hormel Pork Supplier Caught on Video Mutilating Piglets" (MFA5). The word "mutilating" connotes intentionality by the supplier and responsibility by Hormel. The phrasing in Joaquin Phoenix's statement in MFA28, "In the past few years, Mercy For Animals has conducted instigation after investigation at Walmart pork suppliers across the country-- and every time they've exposed horrific animal abuse" connotes that abuse continues even after the company is exposed, and that there is no punishment for the criminal nor justice for the victim.

MFA also connotes that society has created an artificial hierarchy for animals. Companion animals, such as dogs and cats, according to MFA, are better treated than farm animals, such as cows, pigs and chickens.

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"Pigs, cows, chickens, fish, and other farmed animals are smart and unique

individuals just like the dogs and cats we share our homes with. But behind the

closed doors of modern farms they endure brutal cruelty. Most spend their entire

lives in dark, crowded, waste-filled sheds. Some are locked in cages so small

they can barely turn around. Because many animal cruelty laws do not protect

them, farmed animals are often beaten, mutilated, and painfully slaughtered."

(MFA11)

In this passage, MFA connotes the meat industry is intentionally mistreating production

animals, and that these practices are new ("modern farms"). The government is not

protecting farm animals, according to MFA, and should be. There is no acknowledgment

of the possibility that protection laws do not exist because they are not needed or that the

organization's perception of cruelty may instead be a simple misunderstanding about

production practices.

MFA urges consumers to get involved with their cause. The homepage uses

emotionally charged calls to action, such as "Together, we can expose and end this

abuse. Join us in helping protect farmed animals by inspiring compassionate food

choices and policies" (MFA12), "Help Save Her" (MFA32), "You can save an animal's

life today!" (MFA33), and "Eat With Compassion" (MFA36). MFA urges consumers to

support the organization financially and animals by adopting a vegan diet. Not only

should consumers not eat meat, according to MFA, they should also ensure that others

consumers are prevented from eating meat as well. The organization espouses

compassionate people do not consume meat, and compassion must be enforced through governmental regulations.

MFA uses military metaphors: "We are on the frontlines fighting to protect farmed animals. From factory farms to corporate boardrooms, courts of justice to courts of public opinion, Mercy For Animals is there to speak up against cruelty and for compassion" (MFA22). MFA is waging war in many theaters (military term for location), and against many adversaries.

MFA connotes legitimacy by association. "As Seen On" (MFA27), followed by logos of major media outlets, connotes the organization has received extensive media coverage. Credibility is also implied through the use of celebrity endorsers. In MFA29, Sia pleads "Help me stop this! @MercyForAnimals video exposes birds tortured for @TysonFoods. Sign the petition. Tysontorturesanimals.com/tyson."

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals

PETA primarily (60.8%, n=101) uses third person perspective, as shown in Table 3, and active voice (72.3%, n=120), as shown in Table 4. While engaging, the text is impersonal. Transitivity was identified in 48.2% (n=80) of all textual units. A summary of transitivity use in provide in Table 5. Almost half (45.7%, n=76) of textual units contain persuasive appeals, as shown in Table 6. Only one third (33.1%, n=55) of units contain directives, as shown in Table 7.

PETA attempts to undermine the hegemonic concept of meat through its use anthropomorphism and dysphemisms to promote the concept of equality. Statements such as "When it comes to pain, love, joy, loneliness, and fear, a rat is a pig is a dog is a

boy" (PETA25), "Now, SeaWorld Plans to Separate Polar Bear Best Friends" (PETA62), and "It's every mother's worst nightmare. And for dolphins, it happens all the time" (PETA98) exemplify the theme of humans and animals as equals. PETA further reinforces this theme of equality in "ANIMALS ARE NOT OURS TO EAT, WEAR, EXPERIMENT ON, USE FOR ENTERTAINMENT, OR ABUSE IN ANY OTHER WAY" (PETA4). PETA personalizes animal rights, giving each animal a name and a story. Rather than trying to save 10 billion lives like MFA, PETA wants consumers to save just this one. This small task may resonate better with less than avid veg*n consumers.

PETA acknowledges that not every consumer may understand why animal rights matter in "Why Should Animals Have Rights?" (PETA24) and in:

> "Almost all of us grew up eating meat, wearing leather, and going to circuses and zoos. We never considered the impact of these actions on the animals involved. For whatever reason, you are now asking the question: Why should animals have rights? READ MORE." (PETA141)

While the organization provides an explanation of why animals should have rights upon click-thru, PETA also deters alternative thinking: "ANIMAL LIBERATION THE TIME IS NOW!" (PETA21). PETA uses a military metaphor in describing the organization's activities. "USDA Website Scrubbed -- and PETA is Fighting Back!" (PETA17).

PETA uses guilt to recruit consumers. The textual units "Like anyone with even half a heart, Eve knows that dogs should be treated like family members and allowed indoors—so she's doing something about it" (PETA41), "Corky is the longest-held

captive orca in history, and time is running out" (PETA50), "There's no need to harm animals in order to keep your hands cozy this winter. Here are a few of our favorite vegan leather gloves" (PETA84), "Your game-day spread doesn't have to be served with a side of cruelty. Learn why you should swap chicken wings for a delicious vegan option" (PETA87), and "Caring People Say 'I Don't' to Renting Elephants for Weddings" (PETA92) tug at heartstrings, create a sense of urgency, and play on the consumer's sense of right and wrong.

PETA's homepage is filled with success stories: "Progress! Goats and Pigs Spared Another Deadly Army Training Course" (PETA36), "We transported these puppies to and from their spay appointments, free of charge" (PETA114), "PETA STAFF RESCUES SKUNK" (PETA117), "PETA's Community Animal Project delivered hundreds of bales of straw to dogs (and even chickens!) forced to live outside in freezing weather" (PETA122)

In describing how people treat animals, PETA uses an abundance of dysphemisms. The exaggeration of negative qualities is particularly obvious in descriptions of alleged hidden cruelty: "'The Suffering Is Real': Behind the Locked Doors of U.S. and French Dog Laboratories" (PETA51) and "PETA protested the shooting, stabbing, and burning of live animals in military trauma training in Jacksonville, North Carolina, home to Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune." (PETA121). Companies that sell meat products are portrayed as cold and heartless: "Temperatures were freezing in Edmonton, Alberta, but the bitter cold still couldn't compare to the iciness at Louis Vuitton" (PETA72).

PETA connotes legitimacy through its 501(c)3 tax status, global operations, and abundance of activities. The organization connotes credibility through association with mainstream media in "In a revealing article, The New York Times reports that animals on "humane" farms can still endure crowding, tail-docking, branding, beak slicing, and more" (PETA65) and "PETA President Ingrid Newkirk once again made The Daily Meal's 2017 list of the most powerful people in food" (PETA73). But it then undermines that credibility in "AP, Check Your Facts: PETA's Report About Testing on Animals Was True" (PETA28).

National Beef Cattlemen's Association

More than half (54.5%, n=24) of textual units use second person perspective, as shown in Table 3. The extensive (88.6%, n=39) use of active voice engages the consumer, as shown in Table 4. The words seem personal, as if NCBA is speaking directly to the consumer in a friendly, approachable, and helpful way. Transitivity was identified in 54.5% (n=24). A summary of transitivity use in provided in Table 5. The majority (68.2%, n=30) of textual units do not contain a persuasive appeal, as shown in Table 6. Emotional appeals are present in 18.2% of textual units, rational appeals are present in 9.1% of units, and ethical appeals are present in 4.5% units. The clear majority (85.7%, n=14) of paragraph units contain persuasive appeals. Directives are used in 50% (n=22) of textual units (see Table 7), and less than half (44.4%, n=18) of navigational links.

NCBA sustains the hegemonic concept of meat by focusing exclusively on food. Pro-meat ideology statements imply "beef is not only part of the family meal, beef is

what people want to eat." Representative statements include "Wrap up the season with crowd-pleasing, hunger-tackling favorites like sliders, quesadillas and chili" (NCBA7) and "Get restaurant-quality meals from the comfort of your own home with recipes that are as impressive as they are easy to make" (NCBA16). Serving beef will make parents feel happy: "At mealtime, kids can be tough little critics. But don't fret - Ground Beef is an inexpensive way to put a variety of kid-friendly meals on the table that you can feel great about" (NCBA10), "Find all of the meal inspiration and cooking know-how you need to feel good about feeding your family" (NCBA13), and "Meal inspiration & cooking know-how you need to feel good about feeding your family" (NCBA22). Emotional appeals drive the point home.

Statements further emphasize that although "families are busy, but beef is quick and easy to cook": "BEEF SO SIMPLE" (NCBA24). Five links to recipes are provided, and consumers are encouraged to "START COOKING" (NCBA 20). Beef is also portrayed as affordable. "COOK MORE, SPEND LESS" (NCBA18) and "Resolve to cook more and spend less this year by using affordable beef cuts to create tantalizing dishes" (NCBA19) imply consumers can provide better quality meals, eating at home with their families, and save money by doing so. Rational appeals drive the point home. Messages are emphasized both through the words chosen, as well as through their display. The use of all capital letters calls attention to the words.

Beef is portrayed as more nutritious than other foods. NCBA asks, "HOW DOES BEEF STACK UP WITH OTHER DINNER OPTIONS?" (NCBA29) and answers: "TOP SIRLOIN 5 GRAMS TOTAL FAT VS SKINLESS CHICKEN THIGHS 7

GRAMS TOTAL FAT *Based on recommended 3oz serving sizes" (NCBA30). The depiction of beef as leaner than the societal standard of white meat assumes that consumers only dinner option is meat, and therefore they must choose one meat over another: "CHOOSE YOUR FAVORITE LEAN BEEF CUT NOW" (NCBA31). Just below these statements about the healthy beef is "For facts about beef and cancer visit FactsAboutBeef.com" (NCBA34). NCBA creates for consumers a connection between beef and cancer. The organization's intention may be to dispel myths about this connection, but the phrasing of this statement reinforces the connection.

No acknowledgement of cattle as the source of food is present. NCBA may be trying to appear approachable to consumers with statements such as "ASK BEEF" (NCBA32). Consumers who are ambiguous about animals as food may respond to statements such as "You've Got Questions & We've Got The Answers Ask an expert about any and all things Beef related" (NCBA33) by asking "why should I have questions?" and "why eat beef at all?" Similarly, "WHAT'S YOUR DINNER MADE OF?" (NCBA28) connotes beef is nutritious in this context, but on an ARVA website these same words would imply something much more ominous.

NCBA connotes credibility through the repeated use words such as "experts." The "For The Media" (NCBA41) link connotes support by media and reinforces credibility.

National Pork Producers Council

NPPC's use of primarily (78.8%, n=52) use third person perspective creates an impersonal relationship between the consumer and the organization, as shown in Table

3. Only 18.2% (n=12) of textual units use second person and only one uses first person perspective, as shown in Table 4. All textual units (n=66) on NPPC's site use active voice, which may engage the consumer despite the lack of intimacy (see Table 4). Transitivity was identified in 24.2% (n=16) of all textual units. A summary of transitivity use is provided in Table 5. The clear majority (89.4%, n=59) of textual units do not contain a persuasive appeal, as shown in Table 6. Emotional appeals are present in 7.6% of textual units, rational appeals are present in 3.0% of units. No ethical appeals are used. Only 18.2% (n= 12) of textual units contain directives, the clear majority (81.8%, n=54) do not, as shown in Table 7. Only 21.1% of navigational links contain directives.

NPPC sustains the hegemonic concept of meat by focusing exclusively on food. Pro-meat ideology statements imply "pork is nutritious," and should be eaten by the "HEALTH CONSCIOUS" (NPPC15). The organization encourages consumer to "Power up with pork in the new year for better health" (NPPC26). NPPC has long called pork "The Other White Meat," implying nutritional benefits comparable to the societal standard of poultry. Pork is also popular: "TOP PINNED RECIPE" (NPPC24).

Further, pro-meat ideology statements imply "pork is quick and easy to cook. NPPC features a variety of recipes and cooking tips: "I HAVE: SELECT A CUT OF PORK I WANT TO: SELECT COOKING METHOD" (NPPC6) and "PORK CHOP 101" (NPPC29). Suggestions for leftovers and the use of a slow cooker reinforce the appeal of pork for busy families. However, most of the featured recipes contain

typographical errors, such as "PREP TIME 5 mins COOK TIME 100 mins SERVINGS 0 people" (NPPC8). The 0 servings error detracts from NPPC's credibility. NPPC repeatedly uses the word "inspire" in textual units: "LOOKING FOR IDEAS? LET US INSPIRE YOU" (NPPC5), but their use of language is not inspiring at all. No emotional connection is built with consumers, and there are few calls to action. Further, the long list of navigational links at the bottom of the homepage is not directed at consumer interests, but rather industry insiders. A link to a Spanish version of the website connotes inclusivity. Links also imply support by media and teachers. Pork should be featured in the media and in classrooms. The link to "Product Terms and Attributes" (NPPC47) is troubling in its placement on this site. It is doubtful that consumers would want to eat food that comes with legal terms. NPPC states "Pork Cares" (NPPC66), but does not explain further.

U.S. Poultry & Egg Association

USPEA's use of primarily (65.6%, n=42) third person perspective creates emotional distance between the consumer and the organization (see Table 3). All textual units (n=64) use active voice, as shown in Table 4. Transitivity was identified in 37.5% (n=24) of all textual units. A summary of transitivity use is provided in Table 5. The majority (64.1%, n=41) of textual units do not contain a persuasive appeal, as shown in Table 6. Rational appeals are present in 29.7% (n=19) of textual units, emotional appeals are present in 4.7% of units (n=3), and 1.6% (n=1) use ethical appeal. Only 28.1% (n=18) of textual units contain a directive; while the clear majority (71.9%, n=46) do not

(see Table 7). Only 25% (n=20) of headlines contain a persuasive appeal. Of the 25 navigational links coded, 15 were found to contain a directive (60%).

USPEA uses language to sustain the hegemonic concept of meat by focusing on food: "POULTRY FEEDS AMERICA" (USPEA19). This statement connotes that without poultry, America would starve. USPEA also connotes the industry has a positive impact on communities: "What is the poultry industry's impact in your community? JOBS WAGES TAXES" (USPEA 8), but this same statement would have the opposite impact on an ARVA website. There is no mention here of any potentially negative environmental impact. Similarly, "An Inside look at U.S. Poultry Processing" (USPEA14) connotes that the industry has nothing to hide, but these same words would connote something ominous on an ARVA website.

The organization uses concretes examples to highlight the industry's environmental stewardship: "Simmons Foods' Southwest City Complex processes and treats an average wastewater flow of 2.28 million gallons per day. The facility has been recycling their treated effluent since 1996, with the total volume of recycled water equaling approximately 2 billion gallons" (USPEA55). The "MONTHLY SPOTLIGHT" (USPEA59) connotes that there are so many good companies, USPEA can feature a different one every month.

USPEA emphasizes on procedural training: "poultry is safe to eat because industry workers are well trained and knowledgeable, and industry organizations use innovative, research-based processes." The majority of textual units on this homepage relay information on industry training programs. Further, "Food safety is a high priority

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for USPOULTRY. The association develops and supports programs that help ensure that safety and quality of U.S. poultry meat and egg products" (USPEA37). People clearly come first for USPEA. No mention of animal safety is present.

USPEA connotes credibility through it size and longevity: "The U.S. Poultry & Egg Association is the world's largest and most active poultry organization. Membership includes producers and processors of broilers, turkeys, ducks, eggs, and breeding stock, as well as allied companies. Formed in 1947, the association has affiliations in 26 states and member companies worldwide. For specific program information, use the links below" (USPEA18). The industry is well supported financially: "USPOULTRY Foundation Announces $10.5 Million in Donor Commitments to Ensuring the Future" (USPEA 6). USPEA connotes support by the media in "Visit the Media Center" (USPEA48). The language on the USPEA site is impersonal, technical, and as one coder termed it "boring."

Emergent Themes

The ARVA organizations contrast the cruelty of meat consumption and the compassion of a vegan lifestyle. A world where "farmed animals are often beaten, mutilated, and painfully slaughtered" should be replaced with "kinder and more just world" where people "eat with compassion" and "animals are no longer raised or killed for food." Animals are presented as equals to humans: "a rat is a pig is a dog is a boy." The meat organizations focus exclusively on food, because "poultry feed America." Meat is presented as central to family meals, as quick, easy, affordable, and nutritious.

Meat organizations suggest consumers' sense of self-worth increases when they serve 'real food' like "crowd-pleasing, hunger-tackling" meals made with meat. Serving meat allows consumers to "feel good about feeding your family."

RO2: Identify the Narrative Strategies that Pro- and Anti-Meat Consumption Organizations Use

Master Plots

Paragraph texts were coded for presence of a master plot (Kent, 2015) and connotative (implied meaning) impact. Data consisted of 100 textual units. A summary of plot usage is provided in Table 8 below.

Table 8. *Summary of Plot Usage on Pro- and Anti-Meat Organization Homepages*

Plot	FARM	MFA	PETA	NCBA	NPPC	USPEA
n	10	12	40	13	7	18
Discovery	1	0	3	9	3	6
Love	0	0	3	0	0	0
Maturation	0	0	0	0	0	4
Rescue	4	5	17	0	0	0
Sacrifice	0	0	0	0	0	0
Transformation	0	0	2	0	0	0
Temptation /Greed	0	0	0	0	0	0
Underdog	0	0	0	2	0	0
Wretched Excess	0	2	4	0	0	0
None	5	5	11	2	4	8

Farm Animal Rights Movement

Only half (n=5) of FARM's paragraph texts use persuasive narratives, as shown in Table 8. The rescue plot is favored (40%, n=4) over other plot options. The words "saving animals" are found repeatedly throughout the homepage: "We're hiring for our 10 Billion Lives campaign! Hit the road & start #SavingAnimals in February!" (FARM19).

Mercy For Animals

MFA uses persuasive narratives in 58.3% (n=7) of paragraph texts, as shown in Table 8. The rescue plot is favored (41.7%, n=5) over other plot options. Narratives focus on exposing the cruel and abusive treatment of animals, as shown below.

"Pigs, cows, chickens, fish, and other farmed animals are smart and unique individuals just like the dogs and cats we share our homes with. But behind the closed doors of modern farms they endure brutal cruelty. Most spend their entire lives in dark, crowded, waste-filled sheds. Some are locked in cages so small they can barely turn around. Because many animal cruelty laws do not protect them, farmed animals are often beaten, mutilated, and painfully slaughtered" (MFA11).

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals

PETA uses persuasive narratives as a primary strategy, with master plots identified in 72.5% (n=29) of paragraph texts, as shown in Table 8. The rescue plot is favored (42.5%, n=17) over other plot options. PETA focuses on alternatives to societal

norms, such as "There's no need to harm animals in order to keep your hands cozy this winter. Here are a few of our favorite vegan leather gloves" (PETA83).

National Beef Cattlemen's Association

NCBA strongly favors persuasive narratives as a primary strategy, with master plots identified in 84.6% (n=11) of paragraph texts, as shown in Table 8. The discovery plot is favored (69.2%, n=9) over other plot options. Consumers are shown how to become a better version of themselves, such as "At mealtime, kids can be tough little critics. But don't fret - Ground Beef is an inexpensive way to put a variety of kid-friendly meals on the table that you can feel great about" (NCBA9).

National Pork Producers Council

NPPC does not uses persuasive narratives as a primary strategy (57.1%, n=4). When NPPC does use a persuasive narrative (42.9%, n=3), it relies exclusively on the discovery plot, as shown in Table 8. Consumers are shown how to provide quality meals for their family, such as "Tips, inspiration and recipes to put chops on the table tonight" (NPPC30).

U.S. Poultry & Egg Association

USPEA uses persuasive narratives in 55.5% (n=10) of paragraph texts, as shown in Table 8. Discovery (33.3%, n=6) and maturation (22.2%, n=4) are the preferred plots. The poultry industry is portrayed as beneficial for consumers, the economy, and the environment, such as "Food safety is a high priority for USPOULTRY. The association develops and supports programs that help ensure that safety and quality of U.S. poultry meat and egg products" (USPEA37).

Paragraph texts (n=100) were further coded for presence of inoculating messages. If inoculating messages were identified, texts were coded for inoculation type: lifestyle norms, credibility, or information about meat. A summary of inoculation usage is provided in Table 9 below.

Table 9. *Summary of Inoculation Usage on Pro- and Anti-Meat Organization Homepages*

Site	Lifestyle Norms	Credibility	Info About Meat	None
FARM	2	0	0	8
MFA	4	0	0	8
PETA	13	2	0	25
NCBA	0	0	1	12
NPPC	0	0	0	7
USPEA	3	3	2	11

Relatively few (30.0%, n=30) inoculation messages were discovered. ARVA organizations seemed to favor inoculations against lifestyle norms and values. Meat organizations used inoculations against each other rather than against ARVA, favoring lifestyle norms and values, credibility, and information about meat.

Emergent Themes

The ARVA organizations tell stories about animals needing to be rescued, animals thriving after rescue, and individuals associated with the meat industry intentionally abusing animals. "Behind the closed doors of modern farms" animals

"endure brutal cruelty" and celebrity endorsers plead "Help me stop this!

@MercyForAnimals video exposes birds tortured for @TysonFoods. Sign the petition.

Tysontorturesanimals.com/Tyson" (MFA29). The meat organizations tell stories that

reinforce the hegemonic concept of meat; consumption is natural, normal, necessary, and

nice. Consumers can "Wrap up the season with crowd-pleasing, hunger-tackling

favorites like sliders, quesadillas and chili" (NCBA6) and "Power up with pork in the

new year for better health" (NPPC26). These stories also express competition between

brands; [beef, pork, poultry] is best. "TOP SIRLOIN 5 GRAMS TOTAL FAT VS

SKINLESS CHICKEN THIGHS 7 GRAMS TOTAL FAT *Based on recommended 3oz

serving sizes" (NCBA28) but "POULTRY FEEDS AMERICA" (UPEA19).

RO3: Identify the Semiotic Cues that Pro- and
Anti-Meat Consumption Organizations Use

Color Palettes

Color palettes were coded for hue, value, saturation, temperature, and

connotative (implied) meanings. A cool blue was used by five of the six organizations as

a primary color. A summary of primary color characteristics is provided in Table 10

below.

Table 10. *Summary of Primary Color Characteristics on Pro- and Anti-Meat Organization Homepages*

Site	Hue	Value	Saturation	Temperature
FARM	Blue	Dark	Dull	Cool
MFA	Blue	Mid	Bright	Cool
PETA	Blue	Light	Dull	Cool
NCBA	Black	Dark	Bright	Cool
NPPC	Blue	Mid	Dull	Cool
USPEA	Blue	Mid	Mid	Cool

Light and bright colors (66.6%, n=4) were preferred as secondary colors. Cool colors were used by five of the six organizations. A summary of secondary color characteristics is provided in Table 11 below.

Table 11. *Summary of Secondary Color Characteristics on Pro- and Anti-Meat Organization Homepages*

Site	Hue	Value	Saturation	Temperature
FARM	Blue	Mid	Bright	Cool
MFA	White	Light	Bright	Cool
PETA	Gray	Light	Dull	Cool
NCBA	Beige	Mid	Mid	Warm
NPPC	White	Light	Bright	Cool
USPEA	White	Light	Bright	Cool

Mid-value (83.3%, n=5), mid-saturation (83.3%, n=5), and warm (66.6%, n=4) colors were preferred as accent colors A summary of accent color characteristics is provided in Table 12 below.

Table 12. *Summary of Accent Color Characteristics on Pro- and Anti-Meat Organization Homepages*

Site	Hue	Value	Saturation	Temperature
FARM	Orange	Mid	Mid	Warm
MFA	Yellow	Mid	Dark	Warm
PETA	Blue	Mid	Mid	Cool
NCBA	Red	Mid	Mid	Warm
NPPC	Gray	Light	Mid	Cool
USPEA	Gray	Mid	Mid	Warm

Farm Animal Rights Movement (FARM)

The primary color used on FARM's homepage is a dull, dark, cool blue, as shown in Table 10. A mid value, bright, cool blue is used as a secondary color, as shown in Table 11. A middle value, medium saturation, warm orange is used as an accent color, as shown in Table 12. The textured, pale, bright, cool gray background would seem a practical choice, as it is less jarring than the use of pure white but still provides high contrast for reading text, yet the texture itself looks dirty. The contrast of the darker, almost foreboding blue with the playful orange accents sends a mixed message. The organization portrays itself as powerful and serious, yet has a whimsical, almost childish alter ego. The color palette is simple, clean, and templated (preformatted, standardized layout).

Mercy For Animals (MFA)

The primary color used on the MFA homepage is a middle value, bright, cool blue, as shown in Table 10. A light, bright, cool white and a light, medium saturation, cool gray are used as secondary colors, as shown in Table 11. A middle value, medium

saturation, warm yellow is used as an accent color, as shown in Table 12. The homepage has a monochromatic feel; it is professional, engaging, and exudes enlightenment. The color palette is clean, easy to read, and pleasant to visit. The blue is committed, calming, and trustworthy. The golden yellow is comforting, and welcoming. The combination of light colors with dark photographic images portray a compassionate approach to a dark topic.

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)

A light, dull, cool blue is used as the primary color on the PETA homepage, as shown in Table 10. A light, dull, cool gray and a middle value, medium saturation, cool blue are the secondary colors, as shown in Table 11. The basic color palette is monochromatic, serious, and calm, however the overuse of multicolor accents (e.g., yellow, orange, red, purple, and green) makes the page seem chaotic. The accent colors (see Table 12) elicit a playful, happy, more circus-like response, which stands in stark contrast to the organization's textual messaging. The use of color accents does not appear to be purposeful; for example, the color box for the "read more" link is the same blue as the color box for the "take action" link. One would expect the "take action" box to be a color which calls attention to it, or better yet, incites action.

National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA)

The NCBA homepage uses Eiseman's (2000) "power" palette: black and beige, with red as the accent color. The primary color (see Table 10), a dark, bright, cool black, is powerful, authoritative, sophisticated; it also represents death. Black intensifies the colors in the photographic images and makes them seem expensive. The middle value,

medium saturation, warm beige is earthy and natural (see Table 11). It connotes the food is authentic, untreated, healthy, and environmentally safe. The middle value, medium saturation, warm red (see Table 12) is dynamic and authoritative. It denotes the "red meat" the organization is promoting, and connotes the "blood" spilled to have that meat. Contrasted with black, the red connotes the death was painful for the animal. The appetite stimulating red, which elicits hunger, combined with the beige connotes the meal will be healthy but have a bland or flavorless taste.

National Pork Producers Council (NPPC)

The primary color used on NPPC's homepage is a middle value, dull, cool blue, as shown in Table 10. A light, bright, cool white is used as a secondary color, as shown in Table 11. Various shades of cool grays are used as accent colors, as shown in Table 12. The dark gray footer is powerful, but not as threatening as black, and unappetizing, conjuring up associations of burnt food, dirt, or mold. The color palette is monochromatic, serene, and professional. It is modern, clean, and portrays commitment, trustworthiness, and sophistication. The use of only cool colors also portrays an emotional coldness, creating distance between the organization and consumers.

U.S. Poultry and Egg Association (USPEA)

USPEA uses a middle value, medium saturation, cool blue as its primary homepage color, as shown in Table 10. It is serious, authoritative. The secondary color used is a light, bright, cool white, as shown in Table 11. Middle value, medium saturation, warm gray and light, dull, cool blue are used as accent colors, as shown in Table 12. The overuse of light blue text boxes connotes that all text is equally

unimportant. The use of a monochromatic color palette should connote neatness and credibility, yet in combination with the overall page layout, it connotes the organization is outdated and its site content is technical and boring.

Photographic Images

Photographic images were coded for subject, setting, prominence, perspective, and connotative (implied) impact. People dressed as animals were coded as "people" rather than "Animal-Anthropomorphized." All photo settings that were staged and shot against a backdrop were coded as "inside building." If the setting could not be determined, it was coded as "other."

FARM preferred people as subjects, MFA and PETA preferred living animals as subjects, and NCBA and NPPC preferred food as subjects. A summary of photographic image subject characteristics is provided in Table 13 below.

Table 13. *Summary of Photographic Image Subject Characteristics on Pro- and Anti-Meat Organization Homepages*

Site	n	Food	Animal-Living	Animal-Dead or Injured	Animal-Anthropo-morphized	People	Other
FARM	7	0	2	0	0	5	0
MFA[1]	16	2	8	1	0	4	1
PETA[2]	69	8	34	1	1	14	11
NCBA	7	5	0	0	0	2	0
NPPC	12	12	0	0	0	0	0
USPEA[3]	8	0	2	1	0	1	2

Note. [1]One image was displayed more than once. The duplicate image was not coded. [2]Five images were displayed more than once. The duplicate images were not coded. [3]One image was a collage of 5 images, each with varying subject, setting, prominence, and perspectives, and was not coded.

FARM and PETA preferred outdoor settings, while the other organizations preferred indoor settings. A summary of photographic image setting characteristics is provided in Table 14 below.

Table 14. *Summary of Photographic Image Setting Characteristics on Pro- and Anti-Meat Organization Homepages*

Site	n	Confinement	OpenSpace	Inside Building	Other
FARM	7	0	4	2	1
MFA[1]	16	2	3	6	5
PETA[2]	69	14	26	20	9
NCBA	7	0	0	7	0
NPPC	12	0	0	11	1
USPEA[3]	8	1	1	2	2

Note. [1]One image was displayed more than once. The duplicate image was not coded. [2]Five images were displayed more than once. The duplicate images were not coded. [3]One image was a collage of 5 images, each with varying subject, setting, prominence, and perspectives, and was not coded.

FARM, PETA, and USPEA preferred medium depth of focus, while MFA, NCBA, and NPPC preferred close-ups. A summary of photographic image prominence characteristics is provided in Table 15 below.

Table 15. *Summary of Photographic Image Prominence Characteristics on Pro- and Anti-Meat Organization Homepages*

Site	n	Close Up	Mid	Distant
FARM	7	2	5	0
MFA[1]	16	11	5	0
PETA[2]	69	26	38	5
NCBA	7	7	0	0
NPPC	12	12	0	0
USPEA[3]	8	2	3	1

Note. [1]One image was displayed more than once. The duplicate image was not coded. [2]Five images were displayed more than once. The duplicate images were not coded. [3]One image was a collage of 5 images, each with varying subject, setting, prominence, and perspectives, and was not coded.

NPPC preferred a downward camera angle, while the other organizations preferred a straight perspective. A summary of photographic image perspective characteristics is provided in Table 16 below.

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Table 16. *Summary of Photographic Image Perspective Characteristics on Pro- and Anti-Meat Organization Homepages*

Site	n	Down	Straight	Up
FARM	7	0	6	1
MFA[1]	16	4	12	0
PETA[2]	69	21	47	1
NCBA	7	4	3	0
NPPC	12	7	5	0
USPEA[3]	8	0	5	1

Note. [1]One image was displayed more than once. The duplicate image was not coded. [2]Five images were displayed more than once. The duplicate images were not coded. [3]One image was a collage of 5 images, each with varying subject, setting, prominence, and perspectives, and was not coded.

Farm Animal Rights Movement (FARM)

There are seven photographic images on the FARM homepage, as shown in Table 13. Five have people as their subject, and two living animals. Five of the images were taken outside, two were shot inside a building (see Table 14). Five of the images used a medium depth of focus, and two were shot close-up (see Table 15). All seven employed a straight perspective, as shown in Table 16. With the exception of the two animal photos, the images all appear to be photographed by an amateur due to their poor quality and composition.

A rotating banner dominates the top of the page, and features three images with superimposed text. The size and placement of these images connotes that they are important to the organization's visual messaging. FARM-IMAGE1 (Figure 2) is of two young women with wearing headphones, and the back of someone's head. The text "Raising Awareness" is superimposed on the image. The women are heavily tattooed and have unnaturally dyed hair; the closer woman seems concerned. Compositional lines

lead the eye to the back of third woman's head. The image was mirror imaged from its original, as evidenced by the text on bracelets, presumably to maintain consistency of text placement. Visually, "Raising Awareness" leads the eye away from the light in the background towards a black abyss. This could either symbolize the hidden evils of meat production, or that consumers metaphorically "live in the dark" and the organization represents enlightenment. However, it could be also interpreted as the organization's ideology leading members away from the mainstream and toward an alternative lifestyle.

Figure 2. Image 1 on the FARM homepage (www.farmusa.org).

The subject of FARM-IMAGE2 (Figure 3) is a dimly lit conference room, full of people in business casual attire. No context (e.g., wall signage) is provided as to what the conference is about. Almost everyone is raising their hand, but it is unclear whether they are asking questions or agreeing. The text "Activating Compassion" is superimposed on the image; the attendees have a variety of facial expressions, none of which portray compassion. Visually, "Activating Compassion" leads the eye from the darkly clothed

attendees in the dimly lit room and towards the light in the background towards the bright light from outside of the room that highlights items on the dais. This could symbolize that consumers metaphorically "live in the dark" and the organization represents enlightenment. However, because access to the door is blocked, it could be also interpreted as the organization's ideology preventing members from basking in the "glow of truth" and brainwashing them with an alternative lifestyle.

Figure 3. Image 2 on the FARM homepage (www.farmusa.org).

FARM-IMAGE3 (Figure 4) features a hen, protectively sitting with chicks in the grass. The text "Saving Animals" is superimposed on the image. The bright sunlight on the hen's back connotes her family's freedom from consumption. The focus on hen's intently staring face, connotes vengeful aggression rather than eliciting a sense of compassion. The decision to use a chicken to represent "animals needing to be saved" is interesting choice. The expected association for "animal" is a mammal.

Figure 4. Image 3 on the FARM homepage (www.farmusa.org).

The four smaller images are associated with news stories. Two images are visible above the fold and two appear below the fold. Their selection seems to be convenient, rather than purposefully furthering the organization's ideology.

The use of "alternative" people (e.g., blue and pink hair dye, tattoos) as subjects in the photographic images on the FARM homepage reinforces ARVA as alternative (e.g., not mainstream) lifestyle. FARM's ideology is expressed through contrasting light and darkness. Consumers "live in the dark," unaware of the harsh realities of animal production. FARM represents enlightenment, providing a means for consumers to improve, or "bring light," to the world. FARM's ideology is also expressed through a gender-biased lens. The use of predominately women as subjects connotes concern about health and well-being, as well as a motherly or nurturing instinct which extends to animals as family.

Mercy For Animals (MFA)

MFA uses 16 photographic images on their homepage, as shown in Table 13. Eight are of living animals, five of people, two of food and one is of a city landscape. Three of the images use a confined setting (see Table 14). Five were shot in open space, six inside a building. The setting is unclear in two of the images. Ten of the photographic images use medium depth of focus, and six were shot close-up (see Table 15). Eight images were shot with a straight perspective, as shown in Table 16. Three images use an upwards perspective, and four use a downwards perspective. Two large photographic images are used for emphasis (MFA-IMAGE1, MFA-IMAGE12).

MFA-IMAGE1 (Figure 5) is a photograph of two young pigs in small pens. The dark exposure and tight cropping connotes the pigs are imprisoned. The dirty pig looks concerned; another pig is comforting it. The composition leads the eye to the pig's eye, the 'window to the soul.' The image connotes that pigs are doomed to abused, and animals with souls, like humans, deserve better. The superimposition of the phrase "Exposing Cruelty" reinforces this message.
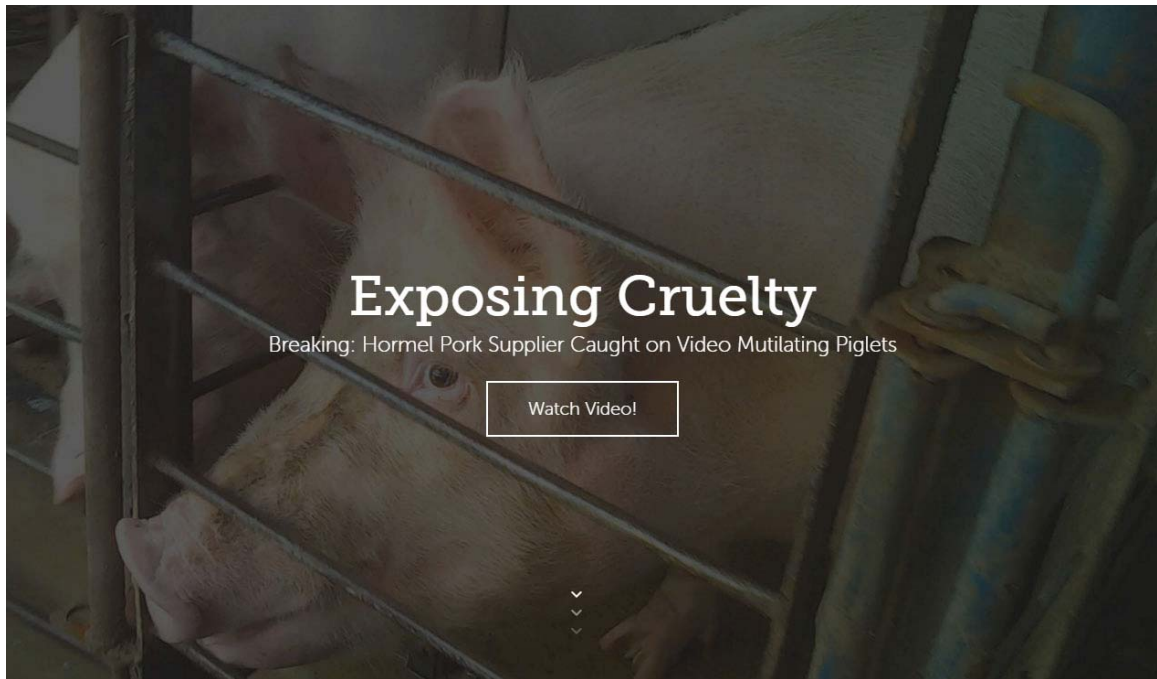
Figure 5. Image 1 on the MFA homepage (www.mercyforanimals.org).

MFA-IMAGE2 (Figure 6) is a photograph of a young cow with a yellow ear tag looking straight into the camera. She is wet and standing in mud, possibly in a feedlot. The damp weather creates a sense of gloom. Her soft eyes are prominent, making the textual plea to "Help Save Her" all the more personal and her doom all the more imminent.
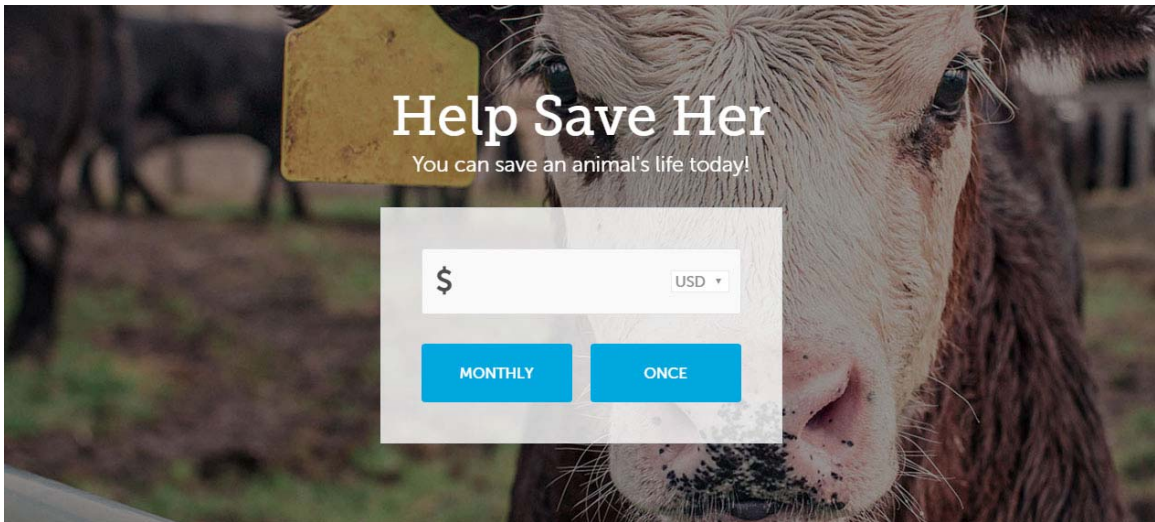
Figure 6. Image 12 on the MFA homepage (www.mercyforanimals.org).

MFA's choice of young animals as subjects tugs at consumer heartstrings. Killing babies has a much stronger emotional impact than killing older animals. The dark lighting of animal photographs is contrasted with the brighter photographs of happy young vegan women who are compassionate eaters.

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)

PETA includes 69 photographic images on their homepage, as shown in Table 13. Five of these images were displayed twice. The images primarily use animals as subjects (33 living, two anthropomorphized, and one injured). People (n=13), food (n=8), and things or places (n=11) are the subjects in the other photographic images. A variety of settings, prominence, and perspective was used (see Table 14, Table 15, and Table 16). Four large images were used for emphasis (PETA-IMAGE1-4). The remaining images accompany news stories.

The subject of PETA-IMAGE1 (Figure 7) is a small money in sterile cage, presumably being used for scientific testing. The monkey is looking directly into the camera, making an emotional connection with the consumer.

Figure 7. Image 1 on the PETA homepage (www.peta.org).

PETA-IMAGE2 (Figure 8) features a brown guinea pig on grass. The bright lighting and composition lead the eye to the guinea pig's eye, the 'window to its soul.' PETA reinforces its animals as equals textual messaging with this technique.

Figure 8. Image 2 on the PETA homepage (www.peta.org).

Though digitally created, PETA-IMAGE3 (Figure 9) was presented as a photographic image and therefore coded as such. The subject of PETA-IMAGE3 is a kangaroo at BBQ grill, wearing a yellow "KISS THE ROO" apron. He has a spatula in each paw; wispy smoke rises from grill. There is a wine bottle in foreground. The anthropomorphized kangaroo is meant to imply that animals don't eat meat, and neither should humans. Many of the photographic images on PETA's homepage, such as PETA-IMAGE3, would have different connotations if they were seen on a pro-meat website. On a pro-meat website, this image would come off as humorous. Their context comes purely from the text that accompanies it.

Figure 9. Image 3 on the PETA homepage (www.peta.org).

Similarly, PETA-IMAGE4 (Figure 10) features dairy cows in a large lush pasture on a bright, sunny day. One cow is smelling the camera. She can smell freedom. The low camera angle gives the udders prominence. The accompanying text states "Big Dairy" does not want consumers to see the linked images. This mixed messaging of text and image is extensive throughout the PETA homepage.

Figure 10. Image 4 on the PETA homepage (www.peta.org).

National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA)

All seven photographic images on the NCBA homepage feature food, were
staged, and professionally shot indoors and close-up (see Table 13, Table 14, and Table
15). Four were shot straight on and three with a downward perspective, as shown in
Table 16. Five of these photographic images are strictly of food, and two feature people
eating food. Four large images with superimposed text in a rotating banner serve as the
primary content of the homepage.

NCBA-IMAGE1 (Figure 11), NCBA-IMAGE3 (Figure 12), and NCBA-
IMAGE4 (Figure 13) feature meals made with beef. The lighting and composition
stimulate the appetite. Beef is warm, hearty and filling: 'real' food. The text helps supply
context, implying that people love eating meals made with beef. Wood, as tables,

countertops, and baskets, is used to invoke nature imagery. NCBA thus reinforces the

concept that eating beef is natural.
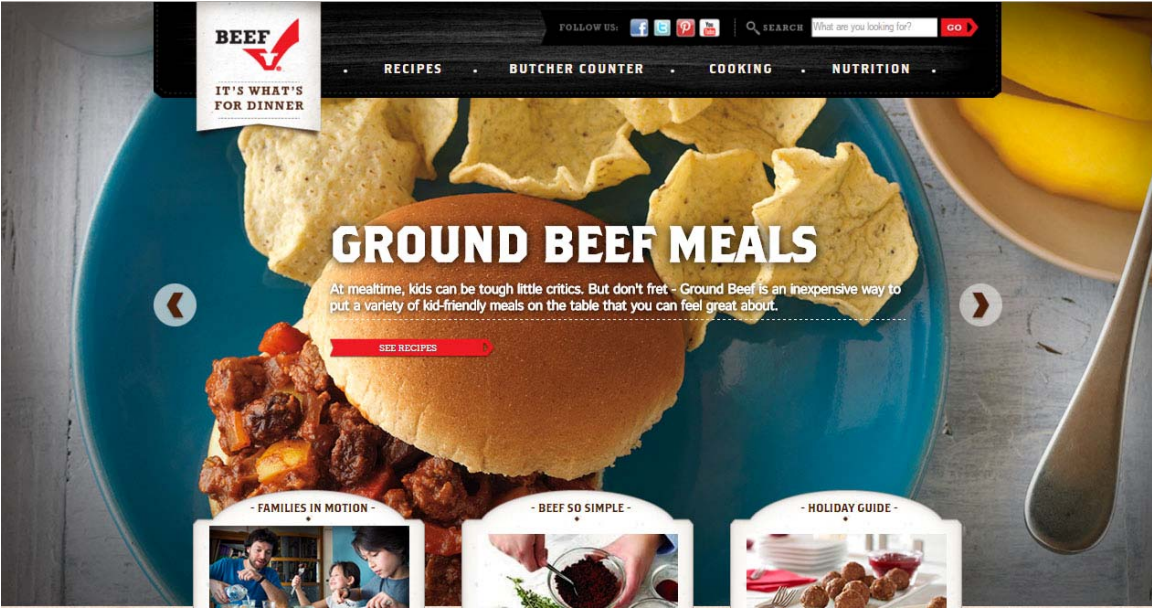
Figure 11. Image 1 on the NCBA homepage (www.beefitswhatsfordinner.com).
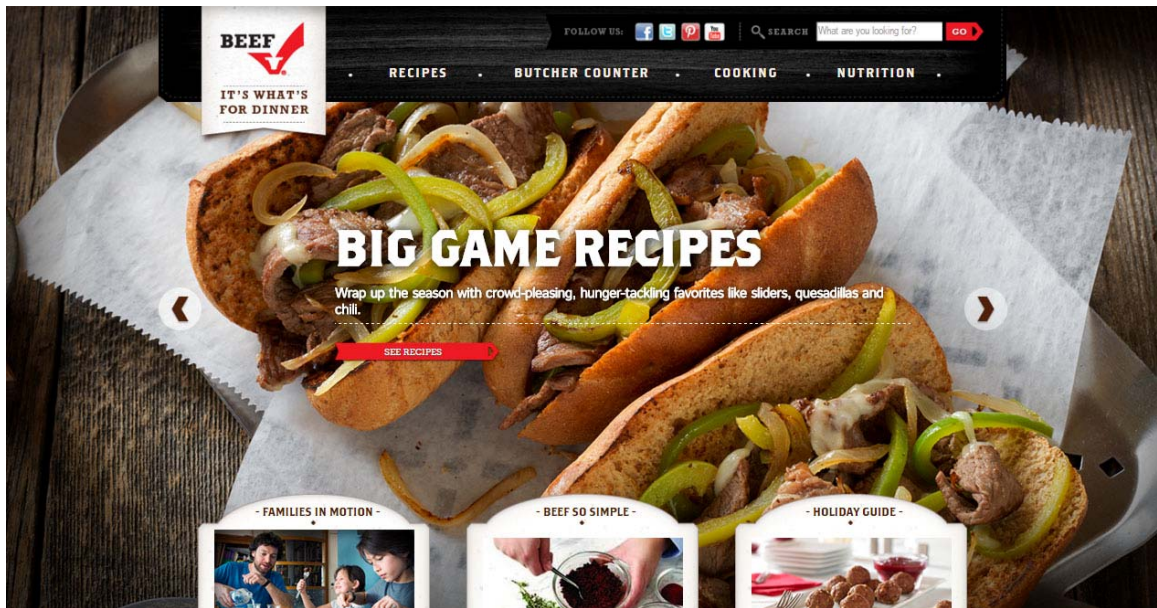
Figure 12. Image 3 on the NCBA homepage (www.beefitswhatsfordinner.com).

Figure 13. Image 4 on the NCBA homepage (www.beefitswhatsfordinner.com).

NCBA-IMAGE2 (Figure 12) features a father and two children, eating dinner together at a table. The image composition leads the eye to the center of the table, implying that beef brings families together. The superimposed text supplies context, implying parents need to serve beef to feel good about feeding their families.

Figure 14. Image 2 on the NCBA homepage (www.beefitswhatsfordinner.com).

National Pork Producers Council (NPPC)

Twelve photographic images are used on NPPC's homepage. Each photographic image has food as its subject (Table 13), was staged, and professionally shot inside (Table 14) and close-up (Table 15). Six of these images were shot with a straight perspective; six were shot with a downward perspective, as shown in Table 16. Three large images were used for emphasis (NPPC-IMAGE5-7)

NPPC-IMAGE5 (Figure 15), NPPC-IMAGE6 (Figure 16), and NPPC-IMAGE7 (Figure 17) feature meals made with pork. The lighting and composition stimulate the appetite. Pork is warm, hearty and filling: 'real' food. The text helps supply context, implying that people love eating meals made with pork. Wood, as tables, countertops and cutting boards, is used to invoke nature imagery. NPPC thus reinforces the concept that eating pork is natural.

Figure 15. Image 5 on the NPPC homepage (www.porkbeinspired.com).

Figure 16. Image 6 on the NPPC homepage (www.porkbeinspired.com).

Figure 17. Image 7 on the NPPC homepage (www.porkbeinspired.com).

U.S. Poultry and Egg Association (USPEA)

Of the eight images are present on the USPEA homepage, two are of living animals, one is of dead animals, one is of people, and two have objects as their subject (see Table 13). One image is collage of five photos, and was not coded.

Rotating banner at top of page features large graphics, several of which contain photographic images. USPEA-IMAGE1 (Figure 18) shows people at large expo walking around, looking at booths. The image has a teal tint and the superimposed text promotes an upcoming expo, presumably for industry insiders.

Figure 18. Image 1 on the USPEA homepage (www.uspoultry.org).

USPEA-IMAGE2 (Figure 19) and USPEA-IMAGE4 (Figure 20) also feature

information for industry insiders.
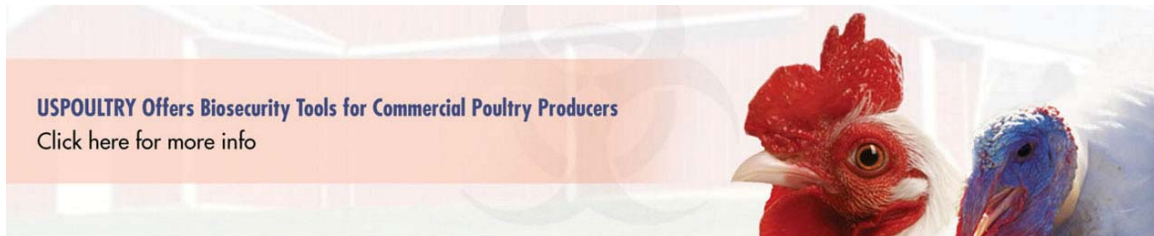
F*igure 19.* Image 2 on the USPEA homepage (www.uspoultry.org).
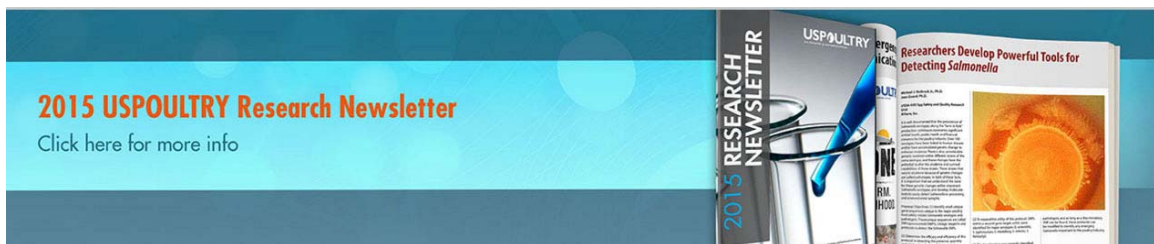
Figure 20. Image 4 on the USPEA homepage (www.uspoultry.org).

USPEA-IMAGE3 (Figure 19) features processed chickens shown hanging by

legs from metal holders. The image is dark and industrial, and only the legs are in view.

Leading space allows for text overlay. The text connotes there are misconceptions about

poultry processing, and that the industry has nothing to hide. Yet this image would have

different connotations if viewed on an ARVA website. Its context comes purely from the text that accompanies it.

Figure 21. Image 3 on the USPEA homepage (www.uspoultry.org).

The USPEA homepage is text heavy and visually unappealing. The language and images are dry, and smell musty, and of stuffy old white men. As one coder noted, "I feel like I've just toured a testing facility." While the organization claims to be innovative and technologically advanced, the outdated layout and simplistic website says otherwise. This mixed messaging detracts from the organization's credibility. It leaves the consumer with no desire to buy poultry and the producers with no desire to join.

Emergent Themes

Input and output of animal production is contrasted on the pro- and anti-meat organization websites. The ARVA organizations portray animals as equals to humans. Image composition focuses on animal eyes, the "window to the soul," reinforcing the concept that animals also have souls. This equality reinforces the anti-meat theme contrasting cruelty versus compassion. ARVA depicts compassionate people exposing the cruelty of using animals as a food source; animals are shot in confined settings in

dark lighting. Further, ARVA depicts compassionate people as vegan; happy, young

women are shot in bright lighting.

The meat organizations focus exclusively on food. Meat is placed at the center of

the dining table, reinforcing the theme of meat as central to family meals. Close-ups of

meat dishes, staged, and professionally shot reinforce the desirability of eating 'real

food.'

RO4: Comparison of Strategies

Textual Strategies

ARVA and meat organizations both favor third person perspective as primary

strategy, as shown in Table 17.

Table 17. *Comparison of Perspective Strategy Usage on Pro- and Anti-Meat Organization Homepages*

Site	1st Person		2nd Person		3rd Person	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
ARVA	34	14.5	80	34.0	122	51.9
Meat	4	2.3	57	32.8	113	64.9

ARVA and meat organizations both favor active voice as primary strategy, as

shown in Table 18.

Table 18. *Comparison of Voice Strategy Usage on Pro- and Anti-Meat Organization Homepages*

Site	Active		Passive	
	n	%	n	%
ARVA	177	75.3	58	24.7
Meat	169	97.1	5	2.9

ARVA (48.1%, n=113) employed transitivity more often than meat organizations (36.8%, n=64), as shown in Table 19.

Table 19. *Comparison of Transitivity Strategy Usage on Pro- and Anti-Meat Organization Homepages*

Site	Foregrounding/Backgrounding		None	
	n	%	n	%
ARVA	113	48.1	122	51.9
Meat	64	36.8	110	63.2

Considering the emotionally charged nature of the ARVA mission, one might expect these organizations to rely heavily on the use of emotional appeals to garner support. However, only a third (36.7%, n=86) of textual units contain such an appeal, and more than half (54.1%, n=127) do not contain any type of persuasive appeal, as shown in Table 20.

Table 20. *Comparison of Persuasive Appeal Strategy Usage on Pro- and Anti-Meat Organization Homepages*

Site	Emotional		Rational		Ethical		None	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
ARVA	86	36.7	17	7.2	5	2.1	127	54.1
Meat	16	9.2	25	14.4	3	1.7	130	74.7

Neither ARVA nor meat organizations rely on perlocution, with less than half of textual units containing a directive, as shown in Table 21.

Table 21. *Comparison of Perlocution Strategy Usage on Pro- and Anti-Meat Organization Homepages*

Site	Directive		None	
	n	%	n	%
ARVA	88	37.4	147	62.6
Meat	52	29.9	122	70.1

Narrative Strategies

ARVA organizations favor rescue plots (41.9%, n=26), as shown in Table 22. In the rescue plot, the protagonist is pitted against a powerful enemy or the hero(ine) ventures out into the cruel world searching for someone or something. The victim in the ARVA narratives are animals confined, tortured, and killed for food. The hero in these narratives is the vegan activist who physically saves these animals, financially supports the saving of animals, and/or champions for a more just world.

Meat organizations favor discovery (47.4%) plots, as shown in Table 22. In the discovery plot, people are on a quest to understand who they are and the world around

them. In the meat narratives, consumers learn how to gain social capital by serving beef, pork, and poultry products to friends and family.

One third of paragraph texts use no narrative plot for both ARVA (33.9%) and meat (36.8%) organizations. Comparisons of narrative characteristics are provided in Table 22.

Table 22. *Comparison of Narrative Plot Strategy Usage on Pro- and Anti-Meat Organization Homepages*

Plot	ARVA	n	%	Meat	n	%
N	62			38		
Discovery		4	6.5		18	47.4
Love		3	4.8		0	0.0
Maturation		0	0.0		4	10.5
Rescue		26	41.9		0	0.0
Sacrifice		0	0.0		0	0.0
Transformation		2	3.2		0	0.0
Temptation /Greed		0	0.0		0	0.0
Underdog		0	0.0		2	5.3
Wretched Excess		6	9.7		0	0.0
None		21	33.9		14	36.8

Relatively few inoculation messages (29.0%, n=29) were discovered. ARVA organizations favor inoculations against lifestyle norms and values. Meat organizations use inoculations against each other rather than against ARVA, favoring lifestyle norms and values, credibility, and information about meat. Comparisons of inoculation characteristics are provided in Table 23.

Table 23. *Comparison of Inoculation Strategy Usage on Pro- and Anti-Meat Organization Homepages*

	Lifestyle Norms		Credibility		Info About Meat		None	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
ARVA	19	30.6	2	3.2	0	0.0	41	66.1
Meat	3	7.9	3	7.9	2	5.3	30	66.1

Semiotic Strategies

Five of the six websites use primarily blues and neutrals, Eiseman's (2000) gender neutral (e.g., equally appealing to both men and women) "serene" palette. Cool, monochromatic color palettes reinforce these organizations' credibility, stability, and seriousness. Overall, the homepages are clean, simple, and templated. NCBA stands apart by using Eiseman's (2000) "power" palette of black, red, and beige.

ARVA organizations feature photographic images of living animals (47.8%, n=44) and people (26.1%, n=24) on their homepages. Meat organizations feature photographic images of food (68.0%, n=17) on their homepages, as shown in Table 24.

Table 24. *Comparison of Photographic Image Subject Strategy Usage on Pro- and Anti-Meat Organization Homepages*

	Food		Animal-Living		Animal Dead or Injured		Animal Anthropo-morphized		People		Other	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
ARVA[1]	10	10.9	44	47.8	1	1.1	1	1.1	24	26.1	12	13.0
Meat[2]	17	68.0	2	8.0	1	1.1	0	0.0	3	12.0	2	8.0

Note. [1]Six images were displayed more than once. The duplicate images were not coded. [3]One image was a collage of 5 images, each with varying subject, setting, prominence, and perspectives, and was not coded.

ARVA images were shot outside (35.9%, n=33) or inside a building (30.4%,

n=28), as shown in Table 25. Pro-meat organization images were staged and shot inside

a building (80.0%, n=20).

Table 25. *Comparison of Photographic Image Setting Strategy Usage on Pro- and Anti-Meat Organization Homepages*

	Confinement		Outside		Indoors		Other	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
ARVA[1]	16	17.4	33	35.9	28	30.4	15	16.3
Meat[2]	1	4.0	1	4.0	20	80.0	3	12.0

Note. [1]Six images were displayed more than once. The duplicate images were not coded. [3]One image was a collage of 5 images, each with varying subject, setting, prominence, and perspectives, and was not coded.

ARVA preferred either close-up (42.4%, n=39) or mid prominence (51.2%,

n=48). Pro-meat organization images were primarily shot with a close-up prominence

(84.0%, n=21), as shown in Table 26 below.

Table 26. *Comparison of Photographic Image Prominence Strategy Usage on Pro- and Anti-Meat Organization Homepages*

	Close-up		Middle		Distant	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
ARVA[1]	39	42.4	48	51.2	5	5.4
Meat[2]	21	84.0	3	12.0	1	4.0

Note. [1]Six images were displayed more than once. The duplicate images were not coded. [3]One image was a collage of 5 images, each with varying subject, setting, prominence, and perspectives, and was not coded.

ARVA images were primarily shot with a straight perspective (70.7%, n=65).

Pro-meat organization images were shot with either a straight perspective (52.0%, n=13)

or downward (44.0%, n=11) perspective. Comparisons of photographic image

perspective strategy are provided in Table 27 below.

Table 27. *Comparison of Photographic Image Perspective Strategy Usage on Pro- and Anti-Meat Organization Homepages*

	Downward		Straight		Upward	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
ARVA[1]	25	27.2	65	70.7	3	3.3
Meat[2]	11	44.0	13	52.0	1	4.0

Note. [1]Six images were displayed more than once. The duplicate images were not coded. [3]One image was a collage of 5 images, each with varying subject, setting, prominence, and perspectives, and was not coded.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore how pro- and anti-meat consumption organizations communicate, reinforce, and advance their ideology online to actively shape public opinion. The emergent themes for textual strategies (RO1), narrative strategies (RO2), and semiotic cues (RO3) illustrate the distinctly different message each organization communicates. ARVA organizations focus on the input of animal production: "animals are tortured and killed for food." Meat organizations focus on the output of animal production: "meat is delicious food." This difference in focus is contrasted on the organizations' websites.

ARVA organizations portray animals as having souls, and describe them as equals to humans. The ARVA organizations contrast the "cruelty of animal consumption" with the "compassion of a vegan lifestyle." Statements by ARVA imply that "compassionate people expose the cruelty of using animals as a food source," "animals need to be rescued; rescued animals thrive," and "people involved in the meat industry use intentionally abusive processes." FARM, for example, states quite bluntly that raising and killing animals for food is unjust. Yet no explanation is presented regarding the fate of farm animals released from production. Where will they go? Who will take care of them? How will it impact on the environment? How will it the impact on the economy?

ARVA ideology emphatically states that the hegemonic concept of meat is cruel, and ARVA offers an alternative, and "more just" lifestyle. This consistent portrayal as an alternative lifestyle is a double-edged sword. ELM (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) has shown repeated messages become internalized. ARVA may be hindering their ability to replace the hegemonic concept of meat through this portrayal. A better strategy may be to leverage ELM principles and promote 'everyday Americans' as supportive of ARVA ideals, speaking of their definition of a "more just world" as if it already existed, and referring to animal production as the alternative lifestyle that destroys live. Over time, this new internalized message may be adopted as the dominate social identity in America.

The meat organizations focus exclusively on meat as food. Statements by meat organizations imply that "meat is quick, easy, affordable, and nutritious," "meat is central to the family meal," "families want to eat it, and in fact, meat brings families together." Further, pro-meat statements imply "consumers are proud to serve meat, and their sense of self-worth increases by serving it" and "people have always eaten meat."

As noted in the emergent themes in narrative strategies, rather than strengthening the universal brand of meat, the pro-meat consumption organizations actively subvert it through internal competition. Instead, the organizations should promote their universal brand (i.e., meat) in a manner that not only resonates with the average consumer, but also encourages collective action by consumers in defense of the meat industry.

With documented consumer preference for online media as an information source (Austin, Liu, & Jin, 2012; Yadavilli & Jones, 2014), developing and executing a

judicious plan for communicating ideologies on organizational websites is critical. Unintentional missteps, such as NPPC's "0 servings" typos and FARM's alternative lifestyle references, may deter consumers from engaging with the organization's brand. Worse yet, inconsistent messaging may sabotage the organization's entire brand strategy. For example, NPPC's visual messaging of warm food to symbolize family meals (see emergent themes for RO3 in findings) is undermined by their overly cool color palette (see Table 10),

The words and phrasing to which consumers are repeatedly exposed direct and frame their perception of reality (Jin, 2011; Krippendorff, 2006; McGregor, 2003). ARVA's frequent use of transitivity effectively communicates the organizations' ideologies. The "enemy" is identified, the "victim" is personified, and the negative qualities of meat consumption are intensified. Pro-meat organizations should take note, and increase their use of vivid adjectives and active verbs (Stella, 2015) to aid in the creation of an "I'm not a veg*n" social identity (Kleine, et al., 1993; Shirazi, et al., 2013). Meat consumption could then aid project a desired public persona, be used as criteria to judge peers, and to signal conformity with societal norms (Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001; Kent, 2015; Stead, et al., 2011). This "I'm not a veg*n" social identity could then be leveraged for motivating collective action of brand championship (Cronin, et al., 2014; Domingo, et al., 2014; Langer, et al., 2013). The ARVA assault on meat consumption would no longer be a one-sided attack, and a more traditional brand war between pro- and anti-meat organizations would commence.

The organizations that use a single master plot in more frequent and more expanded persuasive narratives will create deeper relationships with consumers (Lin & Chen, 2015) that are more resistant to the counternarratives of opposing ideologies (Dahlstrom, 2014; Flynn, 2015. While the pro- and anti-meat organizations portray a battle with each other over animal use, the real battle is over the meat consumption preferences of ambivalent consumers. Skillful use of persuasive narratives and inoculating messages will provide an edge in this battle of the brands (Dahlstrom, 2014; Flynn, 2015; Yu & Chang, 2013).

Consumers form brand associations in as little as 1/20th second (Sherin, 2012), therefore the colors and images consumers see are processed before the words that consumers read are comprehended. Color choices should reflect desired emotions based on documented consumer associations, and used to direct the eye to focal points such as calls to action (Sherin, 2012). This simple tactic was not used by the organizations in this study, as evidenced by the chaotic circus on PETA's homepage and USPEA's homepage relative monotony.

The principles of photographic composition (e.g., lines, lighting, rule of thirds, and depth of field) should be considered by organizations when selecting photographic images for use on their websites. These elements reinforce or undermine the organization's ideology subliminally (Presi, Maehle, & Kleppe, 2016). Purposeful choice of subject, setting, prominence, and perspective will ensure that images convey emphasis and emotion in a manner that expands consumer acceptance of ideological messaging. MFA-IMAGE1 (Figure 5), the pig in prison photograph, is an excellent

example of purposeful choice. Seen out of context, consumers would still associate the image with ARVA. In contrast, FARMIMAGE3 (Figure 4), PETA-IMAGE2 (Figure 8), PETA-IMAGE3 (Figure 9), and PETAIMAGE4 (Figure 10) require context for consumers to decode their ideological meaning. These images would have opposite inferences if seen on a pro-meat website. Similarly, USPEA-IMAGE3 (Figure 21) would have opposite inferences if it were seen on an ARVA website. Its context comes purely from the text that accompanies it.

While the pro- and anti-meat organization messages are distinctly different, the pro- and anti-meat organizations' communication strategies messages are relatively similar. All organizations prefer third person and active voice as a primary strategy. None of the organizations prefer persuasive appeals, perlocutions or inoculation as a primary strategy. The primary difference in strategy lies in the increased use of transitivity by anti-meat organizations.

Implications for Research

With an understanding of how pro- and anti-meat consumption ideologies are communicated online, researchers can explore how these strategies impact the formation of social and group identity, motivate collective action, impact anti- and alternative consumption, and how inoculation can be used to mediate these impacts. A full understanding of these processes will enable practitioners to more effectively inform public opinions about agricultural and natural resource issues.

Future research should also further explore how communications strategies are used to propagate pro- and anti-meat ideologies. Are the strategies seen on the website the same as strategies used on social media? Are the strategies seen on the website the same as strategies used on print? If the ARVA strategies are used on pro-meat websites, would they be any more or less effective? If the pro-meat strategies are used on the ARVA websites, would they be any more or less effective? Would high narrative, emotional appeal messages engage consumers more than low narrative, rational appeals? Does appeal order matter over time? What are the impacts of counternarratives to inoculate consumers to organizational oppositional messaging? Is there a 'best practices' strategy? Future studies can, and should, answer these questions.

Implications for Practice

Words and visuals shape consumer perceptions of agriculture and natural resources (Krippendorff, 2006; McGregor, 2003). The text, narratives, and visual elements used on websites should be purposefully and consistently connected to the social and group identity of consumers in the brand's target audience (Tuškej, et al., 2013). Creating, or reinforcing, these identities ensure that consumers are more fully engaged with the brand. Practitioners can use these findings to better leverage social and group identities to increases brand loyalty and to motivate collective action for brand championship.

Recommendations for Anti-Meat Consumption Organizations

As most consumer are online skimmers, rather than readers, headlines should contain a persuasive appeal. The use of second person would reinforce the appeal, create more engagement, and reinforce the personalization of the cause. Appeals in the paragraph text appeal is likely unseen by skimmers who are not engaged by the headline. Persuasive appeals and directives should be present in every navigational link. A clear call to action would increase click-thru, and potentially sales, donations and other forms of engagement with the organizations. Include a financial statistic on the homepage that explains how donations are spent. The most important content on a webpage should appear "above the fold" (Nielsen, 2001). Scrolling should be kept to a minimum. Stronger content is more effective than more content.

All the websites use a primarily blues and neutrals, Eiseman's (2000) "serene" palette, which is gender neutral (e.g., equally appealing to both men and women). Cool, monochromatic color palettes reinforce the organizations' credibility, stability, and seriousness. Interestingly, the ARVA sites do not take advantage of warm accent colors to focus attention and elicit action by the viewer. Judicious use of warm accent colors could enhance consumer engagement and increase response to calls to action. Further, the "serene' palette elicits calmness, when the desired response from a consumer should be to action in support of the cause.

Many of the photographic images on ARVA homepages, such as FARMIMAGE3 (Figure 4), PETA-IMAGE2 (Figure 8), PETA-IMAGE3 (Figure 9), and PETAIMAGE4 (Figure 10), would have opposite inferences if it were seen on a pro-

meat website. Their context comes purely from the text that accompanies it. Photographic images should be purposefully chosen to reinforce ideological messaging.

FARM should settle on one consistent identity. The title of the homepage should be changed from "Home" to something more informative, such as the organization's name. If consumers have multiple tabs open in their browsers, this simple change will allow FARM to stand out. FARM's site feels heavy overall, unlike the hope they intend to offer.

MFA's website welcomes the viewer with open arms, cheerfully inviting one to explore deeper and deeper into the site. While the site is optimized for mobile devices, the use of a collapsed navigation menu on a monitor is limiting. The site should be recoded to autodetect mobile and desktop browsers, with an expanded menu visible on the desktop version. MFA use of military metaphors backfires. They do not flout the outcomes of their "battles" and without more in-depth exploration of the website a consumer might think the organization is all talk, no results. MFA's emphasis on the rampant extent of animal abuse and de-emphasis on the organization's successes causes the organization to appear weaker than it really is. Further, some consumers may associate MFA with militia or terrorist tactics, which is certainly not the organization's intent.

PETA spews seemingly endless amounts of information, until the viewer feels like a caged and tortured animal, desperate for rescue. While this strategy may be a device to elicit sympathy, the more likely outcome is for ambiguous consumers to associate PETA with discomfort. Stories are repeated, but not intentionally for impact;

rather it is most likely due to the dynamic coding of the website. Many stories on the PETA homepage are republished from other sites. The organization claims responsibility for the exposure and/or results of other organizations. A much better strategy would be to cultivate specific stories to reinforce PETA's mission and/or celebrate PETA's activities.

Most of the images of people lack the eye contact feature in the images of the animals. People do not look you in the eye and can not be trusted, as opposed to animals whose hearts are pure. Yet as the people images tend to use supporters as subjects, this messaging technique detracts from PETA's credibility. The people shown are a variety of races, and mostly women in mid-twenties to early thirties. This choice may detract from any sense of inclusivity that PETA is trying to portray. Additionally, many of photographs do not appear to be taken by a professional. This might be an attempt to seem more relatable to consumers, but as a large, global organization, professionalism is expected. Purposeful selection of images is also expected; most photographic images have meaning through their context. The sheer volume of visual input is exhausting and detracts from the organization's credibility.

Recommendations for Pro-Meat Consumption Organizations

Headlines on the pro-meat homepages should contain a persuasive appeal to capture the attention of skimmers. The use of second person would reinforce the appeal, create more engagement, and reinforce the 'meat is for families' messaging. Again, appeals in the paragraph text appeal is likely unseen by skimmers who are not engaged

by the headline. Persuasive appeals and directives should be present in every navigational link. Clear calls to action are needed on the pro-meat homepages.

Two of the three websites use a primarily blues and neutrals, Eiseman's (2000) "serene" palette, which is gender neutral (e.g., equally appealing to both men and women). Cool, monochromatic color palettes reinforce the organizations' credibility, stability, and seriousness. However, the palpably cool palette overpowers the images of warm food; particularly for NPPC it seems more like looking inside a meat freezer than at a freshly laid dinner table. Increased use of warm accent colors would create a stronger sense of the coziness of home and family. Overall, the homepages are clean, simple, and templated. The use of black and grays by the beef and pork organizations is a poor choice. In the context of food, black and grays may elicit associations of burnt food or mold. Using a deep, dark blue will elicit the same sense of power and credibility without those negative connotations.

USPEA-IMAGE3 (Figure21) would have opposite inferences if it were seen on an ARVA website. Its context comes purely from the text that accompanies it. Photographic images should be purposefully chosen to reinforce ideological messaging.

Implications for Education

Professors are responsible for preparing students to be successful in the agricultural communications profession. In addition to teaching communications fundamentals, such as consistency and purposiveness, these instructors must emphasize to students how the theories and skills learned fit into a larger picture for employers. The

repercussions of failing to follow best practices may impact organizational profitability, and therefore the graduate's continued employment.

Words and visuals shape student perceptions of agriculture and natural resources (Krippendorff, 2006; McGregor, 2003). Information builds literacy, while emotion builds meaning and connection. The words used to describe animals and animal production in course titles and lectures impact student opinions; how students learn about agriculture influences how they will later communicate about agriculture. A professor's words are naturally imbued with credibility as a persuasive appeal. The products served in campus dining halls and the organizations that sponsor a university likewise impact student opinions. Whether students build relationships with lentils in peanut sauce or with Slovacek sausage may ultimately alter society's perceptions of agriculture and the hegemonic concept of meat in the U.S.

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APPENDIX A

Screenshot of farmusa.org

Screenshot of mercyforanimals.org

Screenshot of peta.org

The Dairy Industry in 60 Seconds Flat

THE DAIRY INDUSTRY IN 60 SECONDS

Kate del Castillo Friendly Defend Your Animals | Pig Facts for Smart People | Silent Scream | Wendy Williams' Sexy Ad to PETA

Wool Is So Yesterday: Why Natural Vegan Fabrics Are Taking Over
More clothing brands are choosing natural, eco-friendly vegan fabrics that are better for animals and the environment.

READ MORE >

Victory! Goats and Pigs Spared ANOTHER Deadly Army Training Course
Following efforts by PETA, goats and pigs will no longer be cut open and killed in an Army training course.

READ MORE >

How? Woman Panics as Snake Becomes Stuck in Her Earlobe
There are plenty of reasons why people should never buy "exotic" animals, but this may be the most bizarre one yet.

READ MORE >

'The Suffering Is Real': Behind the Locked Doors of U.S. and French Dog Laboratories
Video footage exposes the horrors of a french animal testing laboratory where dogs are bred to have muscular dystrophy and live a short and painful life.

READ MORE >

PETA's Vegan Ads Rub Panama's Health Ministry the Wrong Way
Panama's Health Ministry rejects ads that promote healthy vegan food for kids.

READ MORE >

Mountain Lions and Bears to Be Captured, Killed in Colorado!
Please urge the commission to scrap plans to kill mountain lions and bears.

TAKE ACTION >

These Funny Animal-Friendly Super Bowl Ads Prove CGI Is the Future
Find out which companies used CGI instead of animals for their Super Bowl ads this year, and learn what you can do to help.

READ MORE >

The New York Times Shines a Spotlight on the Dark Secrets of 'Humane Meat'
In a revealing article, The New York Times reports that animals on 'humane' farms can still endure crowding, tail-docking, branding, beak slicing, and more.

READ MORE >

Get That Date-Night Glow With These Cruelty-Free Vegan Highlighters
Want to recreate that healthy summer glow for your winter date night? Try one of these cruelty-free and vegan highlighters.

READ MORE >

Now, SeaWorld Plans to Separate Polar Bear Best Friends
Since it can't breed orcas anymore, SeaWorld is setting its sights on polar bears.

READ MORE >

Bears Held Captive and Forced to Perform Need Help in Minnesota!
Please join us in letting River's Edge Convention Center management know that an arena filled with noisy crowds is no place for wild animals.

TAKE ACTION >

Vegan Leather Gloves to Keep Your Digits Warm This Winter
There's no need to harm animals in order to keep your hands cozy this winter. Here are a few of our favorite vegan leather gloves.

READ MORE >

Get Involved
We're Hiring!
Join PETA's Action Team to Help Animals
Intern at PETA

For the Media
Media Center
Contact PETA's Media Department
Breaking News
Ads and Public Service Announcements

Visit PETA's Media Center >

Shopping
PETA Valentine's Day Greeting Cards

Visit PETA Catalog >

Tell Entertainers to Cancel Their Performances at SeaWorld Food Festival!

Entertainers listen to their fans, so please ask those performers to cancel their appearances at SeaWorld.

TAKE ACTION >

Bodypainted 'Crocodiles' Crawl Out of Giant Louis Vuitton Bag and 'Die'

Temperatures were freezing in Edmonton, Alberta, but the bitter cold still couldn't compare to the iciness at Louis Vuitton.

READ MORE >

Roadside Zoo Reportedly Uses Paralyzing Drug to Immobilize Animals

PETA demands action following reports that an Ohio roadside zoo gives animals a drug that causes temporary paralysis, leaving them unable to move but fully capable of feeling pain.

READ MORE >

Why Ingrid Newkirk Is One of the Most Powerful People in Food

PETA President Ingrid Newkirk once again made The Daily Meal's 2017 list of the most powerful people in food.

READ MORE >

Caring People Say 'I Don't' to Renting Elephants for Weddings

Renting an elephant for your wedding is cruel and dangerous.

READ MORE >

7 Facts About Chicken Wings—Just in Time for Super Bowl LI

Your game-day spread doesn't have to be served with a side of cruelty. Learn why you should swap chicken wings for a delicious vegan option.

READ MORE >

LOAD MORE POSTS

PETA in Action

SHEIK GETS A BRAND-NEW DOGHOUSE
This pup's previous shelter wasn't going to protect him from the harsh winter, so we brought him a brand new wooden doghouse. To find out more, visit PETA.org/Doghouse.

SEE PETA'S MILESTONES >

Almost all of us grew up eating meat, wearing leather, and going to circuses and zoos. We never considered the impact of these actions on the animals involved. For whatever reason, you are now asking the question: Why should animals have rights? **READ MORE**

Screenshot of beefitswhatsfordinner.com

Screenshot of porkbeinspired.com

Screenshot of uspoultry.org

Kent's 20 Master Plots

Adventure	In an adventure story, our attention is on the journey. Often, adventures take the characters to exotic locations, dangerous and unexpected places. Adventure is used to tell stories of Olympic athletes, new space technology, automotive innovations, a war correspondent, or the exciting experiences of a visionary CEO or leader. Adventure stories are useful as frames for important speeches, television interviews, historical documents, and other venues like the Internet and social media.
Discovery	Discovery is a character based plot. Discovery is a plot about people and their quest to understand who they are and the world around them: "Who am I?" "How did I get here?" "Why am I here?" "What does this all mean?" Discovery answers life's questions using characters and situations that seem real and concrete. Discovery plots fit well with activists (GLBTQ, animal protection/rights, outdoors people, protest leaders), as well as individuals and leaders in other contexts.
Escape	The escape plot is literal, someone is being held against his/he will and wants to escape. In the escape plot, the victim is his/her own hero. Often the victim is portrayed as having been wrongly accused or falsely imprisoned. In the escape plot, instead of waiting patiently to be rescued, the victim often frees him/herself. Escape plots often revolve around unfair imprisonment.
Forbidden Love	This story takes many forms: older man and younger women, younger man and older woman, couple united across racial, ethnic, or class boundaries, etc. Forbidden love often ends badly. The lovers are forced to conform to society, and face ethnic, or class boundaries, etc. Forbidden love often ends badly. The lovers are forced to conform to society, and face disillusionment, death, mutilation, etc. Social convention usually wins. Forbidden love stories are used by politicians, activist organizations, and members of racial and ethnic groups working for social harmony.
Love	The common story is of two lovers who find each other in the beginning of the story, but circumstances separate them. They spend the remainder of the story trying to get back together. Love stories may be used in an assortment of contexts including animal welfare organizations, environmental activists, organizations supporting partner benefits, etc.
Maturation	Maturation is a coming of age story. The focus of the story is on the protagonist's moral and psychological growth. Consider children subjected to cyber-bullying or dealing with terminal or potentially fatal diseases. Activists and immigrant organizations tell maturation stories. The prodigal son, and the "local boy/girl does good" story are forms of maturation.
Metamorphosis	The metamorphosis plot is about literal change from one form to another (lycanthrope, vampire, robot, transgender). Public relations, stories about metamorphosis are becoming increasingly real as technology allows us to

	create more-realistic computers and robots/androids, sentient computer viruses and operating systems, transplant heads on to new bodies, etc. Similarly, activist organizations (health and GLBTQ) often deal with physical and emotional transformation. This plot will also be reified as DARPA robots eventually take to the battlefields or streets, or evolve into "personal helpers/pets," etc.
Pursuit	The pursuit story is essentially a hide-and-seek, where one person, organization, or group pursues another. Consider the search for subatomic particles like the Higgs boson, a scientist defecting from another country, international computer hackers, "deadbeat dads" hiding from the law, or soldiers on the trail of a captured comrade. A pursuit story might be used to frame a feature story, or used in supplementary material on the Internet, social media, and annual report, internal documents used to socialize new employees, as narrative frames for organizational videos, etc.
Quest	The quest is the "search for a person, place, or thing, tangible or intangible." The protagonist hopes that their life will be changed if they find the object of their quest. The quest could be for a disease cure, a new automotive technology, a rewarding career, a college major or job, or the place for a perfect vacation. The quest story is suitable for organizational histories, social media and blogs, annual reports, etc.
Rescue	Typically, the hero(ine) of the rescue plot has to venture out into the cruel world searching for someone or something. Rescue is a physical plot, depending heavily on action. Another genre of rescue pits the protagonist against a powerful enemy in an effort to save the business, farm, etc. Thus, the "victim," in this case could be the "truth," "freedom," etc. embodied in a publication, public building, trial, park, etc. The rescue plot is used by activist groups to warrant supporting petitions, and soliciting financial donations.
Revenge	The revenge story is about taking the law into one's own hands when the powers that be fail to do what is right. The protagonist does not want to have to break the law, but is forced into it by circumstances. The protagonist of the revenge story is generally a good person forced to take vengeance into his/her own hands. The revenge story often pits the little guy against the big corporation or a corrupt governmental agency or police department. Revenge has been used to describe hacking activities, governmental actions in other countries, employee (and company) mistreatment stories, etc.
Riddle/Mystery	The riddle challenges the audience to figure out what happened by means of enigmatic clues and bits of seemingly trivial information. Some riddles have existed for ages (such as mathematics, physics, and cryptology questions), while others have just emerged as the physical, social, and economic environment has changed with climate change, finance, crime, etc. Science and governmental organizations often draw upon mystery.
Rise/Fall	The rise and fall story so common among politicians, entertainers, celebrities, etc. Indeed, the fall or descent story often follows from the "wretched excess" plot. The story can recount either the rise, or the fall,

	or both. Rise and fall stories have been used extensively for propaganda purposes, and for marketing and reputation building activities.
Rivalry	Rivalry pits two competing characters that are working for the same goal against each other. Famous examples include the Tesla/Edison rivalry surrounding AC vs. DC current, and the more modern rivalries among space exploration companies competing to be the first to create space tourism and reusable rockets. Rivalry is a perfect plot for competing scientists, researchers, and activists. Rivalry is a plot about human nature and morality. Rivalry can be a competitive story, in which each character wants to be the first to reach a particular goal (make it to the top of the mountain, reach the North Pole, sequence human DNA, cure cancer), or a historical story.
Sacrifice	Sacrifice often takes the form of one person making a sacrifice that is out of character for him/her and comes with a stiff price tag. The story needs to lead up to the point where s/he is ready and willing to make the sacrifice but to be believable this process needs to be built up. Often the person making the sacrifice is seemingly without morals. Explorers, activists, test pilots, single parents, war heroes, scientists working in remote or dangerous locations, people working for racial, religious, economic, or political rights, and other dynamic figures are perfect for telling sacrifice stories.
Temptation/Greed	The temptation story is about a person rather than the object of their temptation. What is the character being tempted with? What is the price to be paid for giving in? The temptation story emerges every few years as a new Ponzi scheme emerges, or surrounding greed in the banking industry. Activist and politicians use it to frame legal reform.
Transformation	Transformation occurs when someone experiences a life-changing event like the loss of a loved one from cancer, an insurance company denies coverage for a life-threatening illness, a person contracts AIDS, etc. The transformation story can support new converts to causes, activism by previously passive supporters, etc. We see transformations as people switch political parties, shift their ideologies from conservative to liberal, suffer an illness and throw themselves into becoming more-healthy, etc. Transformation is useful in political public relations contexts, by activists, and in social media and blog content.
Underdog	The underdog is the little guy/gal against the big corporation, government, agency, etc. The underdog needs to appear motivated and realistic. Often the underdog is an-over-the top personality, but there is a reluctant underdog who struggles against petty tyranny. The underdog plot is used to frame activist messages (environmental, climate change, educational spending assistance for the homeless), fund-raising campaigns (AIDS, breast cancer) or other health/disease issue (medicinal marijuana, RU486, abortion).
Wretched Excess	The plot usually revolves around a single person, although a focus on a group of people and how they were changed is possible. The wretched excess plot is employed by activists, religious groups, and others, often to support issues management efforts, new legislation, increased

taxes/regulation, CEO fraud or misbehavior, corporate misinformation, etc.

Note. Adapted from "The power of storytelling in public relations: Introducing the 20 master plots" by M.L. Kent, 2015, Public Relations Review, 41(4), 480–489.

CODING INSTRUCTIONS | TEXTUAL STRATEGIES
RO1: Identify the textual strategies that organizations use to reinforce and/or advance their ideology in the public sphere.
Data: Headlines, Paragraphs, Navigation

CATEGORY: PERSPECTIVE
Whose perspective is the text told from?
Developed following Abrams, et al. (2015), Grice (1975), Higgins & Walker (2012), Johar & Sirgy (1991), Krause, et al. (2015), Moore (2014), Moran, et al. (2016), van Dijk (201), and van Leeuwen (2005).

Subcategory 1: Perspective   **Code: First**
                                                        Second
                                                        Third

Coding Procedure: Obtain a general feel for the tone, style, and meaning of the text by carefully reading it at least twice before coding. On the first read, seek only to familiarize yourself with the text. On the second read, pay closer attention to the language used as well as how the language sustains, or undermines, the hegemonic concept of meat (eating meat is normal, nice, necessary, and natural). Read through the text a third time and identify which perspective is in use. Generate preliminary notes identify excerpts that may be related to the group's ideology or are otherwise important.

First – I, we, us
Second – you
Third – it, he, them

Subcategory 2: Symbolic/Signified/Implied Meaning   **Code: Open**

Coding Procedure: List associative words to describe the implied and/or emotive content. Use rich descriptions. What themes do you see emerging? Does its meaning rely on its context? Would your associations be different if it was on the opposite (pro/anti) webpage?

Using the constant comparative method, examine narrative content holistically to determine how each organization uses master plots to sustain, or undermine, the hegemonic concept of meat.

CATEGORY: VOICE
The relationship between subject and verb.
Developed following Abrams, et al. (2015), Grice (1975), Higgins & Walker (2012), Johar & Sirgy (1991), Krause, et al. (2015), Moore (2014), Moran, et al. (2016), van Dijk (201), and van Leeuwen (2005).

Subcategory 1: Voice   **Code: Passive**
                                                  Active

Coding Procedure: Obtain a general feel for the tone, style, and meaning of the text by carefully reading it at least twice before coding. On the first read, seek only to

familiarize yourself with the text. On the second read, pay closer attention to the language used as well as how the language sustains, or undermines, the hegemonic concept of meat (eating meat is normal, nice, necessary, and natural). Read through the text a third time and identify which perspective is in use. Generate preliminary notes identify excerpts that may be related to the group's ideology or are otherwise important. Review all notes. What themes do see emerging?

Active – Bob hit the ball
Passive – The ball was hit by Bob

Subcategory 2: Symbolic/Signified/Implied Meaning   Code: Open

Coding Procedure: List associative words to describe the implied and/or emotive content. Use rich descriptions. What themes do you see emerging? Does its meaning rely on its context? Would your associations be different if it was on the opposite (pro/anti) webpage?

Using the constant comparative method, examine narrative content holistically to determine how each organization uses master plots to sustain, or undermine, the hegemonic concept of meat.

Category: TRANSITIVITY
Foregrounding/backgrounding of information.
Developed following Abrams, et al. (2015), Grice (1975), Higgins & Walker (2012,. Johar & Sirgy (1991), Krause, et al. (2015), Moore (2014), Moran, et al. (2016), van Dijk (201), and van Leeuwen (2005).

Subcategory 1: Foregrounded   Code: Open

Coding Procedure: Obtain a general feel for the tone, style, and meaning of the text by carefully reading it at least twice before coding. On the first read, seek only to familiarize yourself with the text. On the second read, pay closer attention to the language used as well as how the language sustains, or undermines, the hegemonic concept of meat (eating meat is normal, nice, necessary, and natural). Read through the text a third time and identify what information is being focused on. Generate preliminary notes identify excerpts that may be related to the group's ideology or are otherwise important.

Example: 41-year-old blonde divorcee runs stoplight, hits another vehicle
Foregrounded – Woman's traits. Being blonde, divorced, and a women effects driving skills
Backgrounded – Impact of the crash. Was the other vehicle damaged? Were the passengers injured?

Subcategory 2: Backgrounded   Code: Open

Coding Procedure: Obtain a general feel for the tone, style, and meaning of the text by carefully reading it at least twice before coding. On the first read, seek only to familiarize yourself with the text. On the second read, pay closer attention to the

language used as well as how the language sustains, or undermines, the hegemonic concept of meat (eating meat is normal, nice, necessary, and natural). Read through the text a third time and identify what information is being obscured. Generate preliminary notes identify excerpts that may be related to the group's ideology or are otherwise important.

Example: 41-year-old blonde divorcee runs stoplight, hits another vehicle
Foregrounded – Woman's traits. Being blonde, divorced, and a women effects driving skills
Backgrounded – Impact of the crash. Was the other vehicle damaged? Were the passengers injured?

Subcategory 3: Symbolic/Signified/Implied Meaning   Code: Open

Coding Procedure: List associative words to describe the implied and/or emotive content. Use rich descriptions. What themes do you see emerging? Does its meaning rely on its context? Would your associations be different if it was on the opposite (pro/anti) webpage?

Using the constant comparative method, examine narrative content holistically to determine how each organization uses master plots to sustain, or undermine, the hegemonic concept of meat.

CATEGORY: PERSUASIVE APPEAL
How does the organization try persuade the audience?
Developed following Abrams, et al. (2015), Grice (1975), Higgins & Walker (2012), Johar & Sirgy (1991), Krause, et al. (2015), Moore (2014), Moran, et al. (2016), van Dijk (201), and van Leeuwen (2005).

Subcategory 1: Persuasive Appeal   Code: Emotional
**   Rational**
**   Ethical**
**   None**

Coding Procedure: Obtain a general feel for the tone, style, and meaning of the text by carefully reading it at least twice before coding. On the first read, seek only to familiarize yourself with the text. On the second read, pay closer attention to the language used as well as how the language sustains, or undermines, the hegemonic concept of meat (eating meat is normal, nice, necessary, and natural). Read through the text a third time and determine how the organization is trying to persuade. Generate preliminary notes identify excerpts that may be related to the group's ideology or are otherwise important.

Emotional – invokes feelings of sadness, joy, guilt, fear (prevention), anger, love, pity, social status (envy or emulation), nostalgia
Rational – uses facts, recoded evidence, statistics, surveys/studies, economic factors such as cost, quality, service
Ethical – Use of endorser: another consumer like me, celebrity, authority figure (doctor, scientist, government, teacher)

Subcategory 2: Symbolic/Signified/Implied Meaning   Code: Open

Coding Procedure: List associative words to describe the implied and/or emotive content. Use rich descriptions. What themes do you see emerging? Does its meaning rely on its context? Would your associations be different if it was on the opposite (pro/anti) webpage?

Using the constant comparative method, examine narrative content holistically to determine how each organization uses master plots to sustain, or undermine, the hegemonic concept of meat.

Category: PERLECUTIONS
Command statements, directives.
Developed following Abrams, et al. (2015), Grice (1975), Higgins & Walker (2012), Johar & Sirgy (1991), Krause, et al. (2015), Moore (2014), Moran, et al. (2016), van Dijk (201), and van Leeuwen (2005).

Subcategory 1: Perlecution   Code: Directive
                                                                            None

Coding Procedure: Obtain a general feel for the tone, style, and meaning of the text by carefully reading it at least twice before coding. On the first read, seek only to familiarize yourself with the text. On the second read, pay closer attention to the language used as well as how the language sustains, or undermines, the hegemonic concept of meat (eating meat is normal, nice, necessary, and natural). Read through the text a third time and determine if the organization wants you to do something. Generate preliminary notes identify excerpts that may be related to the group's ideology or are otherwise important.

Directive – Click here to read about our organization
None – About Us

Subcategory 2: Symbolic/Signified/Implied Meaning   Code: Open

Coding Procedure: List associative words to describe the implied and/or emotive content. Use rich descriptions. What themes do you see emerging? Does its meaning rely on its context? Would your associations be different if it was on the opposite (pro/anti) webpage?

Using the constant comparative method, examine narrative content holistically to determine how each organization uses master plots to sustain, or undermine, the hegemonic concept of meat.

CODING INSTRUCTIONS | TEXTUAL STRATEGIES
RO2: Identify the narrative strategies that organizations use to actively shape public opinion.
Data: Paragraphs

CATEGORY: MASTER PLOT

Narratives are small-scale, plot-driven, character-populated communicative excerpts. Obtain a general feel for the tone, style, and meaning of the narrative by carefully reading them at least twice before coding. On the first read, seek only to familiarize yourself with the narratives. On the second read, pay closer attention to the language used as well as how that language may promote support for pro/anti-meat ideologies.
Developed following Kent (2015).

Subcategory 1: Master Plot   **Code: Plot Name**

Coding Procedure: Read through the narrative a third time and identify which, if any, plot from the table is in use. Generate preliminary notes identify excerpts that may be related to the group's ideology or are otherwise important. Review all notes. What themes do see emerging?

NARRATIVE PLOTS	
Discovery	Discovery is a character based plot. Discovery is a plot about people and their quest to understand who they are and the world around them: "Who am I?" "How did I get here?" "Why am I here?" "What does this all mean?" Discovery answers life's questions using characters and situations that seem real and concrete. Discovery plots fit well with activists (GLBTQ, animal protection/rights, outdoors people, protest leaders), as well as individuals and leaders in other contexts.
Love	The common story is of two lovers who find each other in the beginning of the story, but circumstances separate them. They spend the remainder of the story trying to get back together. Love stories may be used in an assortment of contexts including animal welfare organizations, environmental activists, organizations supporting partner benefits, etc.
Maturation	Maturation is a coming of age story. The focus of the story is on the protagonist's moral and psychological growth. Consider children subjected to cyber-bullying or dealing with terminal or potentially fatal diseases. Activists and immigrant organizations tell maturation stories. The prodigal son, and the "local boy/girl does good" story are forms of maturation.
Rescue	Typically, the hero(ine) of the rescue plot has to venture out into the cruel world searching for someone or something. Rescue is a physical plot, depending heavily on action. Another genre of rescue pits the protagonist against a powerful enemy in an effort to save the business, farm, etc. Thus, the "victim," in this case could be the "truth," "freedom," etc. embodied in a publication, public building, trial, park, etc. The rescue plot is used by activist groups to warrant supporting petitions, and soliciting financial donations.

Sacrifice	Sacrifice often takes the form of one person making a sacrifice that is out of character for him/her and comes with a stiff price tag. The story needs to lead up to the point where s/he is ready and willing to make the sacrifice but to be believable this process needs to be built up. Often the person making the sacrifice is seemingly without morals. Explorers, activists, test pilots, single parents, war heroes, scientists working in remote or dangerous locations, people working for racial, religious, economic, or political rights, and other dynamic figures are perfect for telling sacrifice stories.
Temptation/Greed	The temptation story is about a person rather than the object of their temptation. What is the character being tempted with? What is the price to be paid for giving in? The temptation story emerges every few years as a new Ponzi scheme emerges, or surrounding greed in the banking industry. Activist and politicians use it to frame legal reform.
Transformation	Transformation occurs when someone experiences a life-changing event like the loss of a loved one from cancer, an insurance company denies coverage for a life-threatening illness, a person contracts AIDS, etc. The transformation story can support new converts to causes, activism by previously passive supporters, etc. We see transformations as people switch political parties, shift their ideologies from conservative to liberal, suffer an illness and throw themselves into becoming more-healthy, etc. Transformation is useful in political public relations contexts, by activists, and in social media and blog content.
Underdog	The underdog is the little guy/gal against the big corporation, government, agency, etc. The underdog needs to appear motivated and realistic. Often the underdog is an-over-the top personality, but there is a reluctant underdog who struggles against petty tyranny. The underdog plot is used to frame activist messages (environmental, climate change, educational spending assistance for the homeless), fund-raising campaigns (AIDS, breast cancer) or other health/disease issue (medicinal marijuana, RU486, abortion).
Wretched Excess	The plot usually revolves around a single person, although a focus on a group of people and how they were changed is possible. The wretched excess plot is employed by activists, religious groups, and others, often to support issues management efforts, new legislation, increased taxes/regulation, CEO fraud or misbehavior, corporate misinformation, etc.
None	There is no master plot discovered within the narrative.

Note. Adapted from "The power of storytelling in public relations: Introducing the 20 master plots" by M.L. Kent, 2015, *Public Relations Review*, *41*(4), 480-489.

Subcategory 2: Symbolic/Signified/Implied Meaning   Code: Open

Coding Procedure: List associative words to describe the implied and/or emotive content. Use rich descriptions. What themes do you see emerging? Does its meaning rely on its context? Would your associations be different if it was on the opposite (pro/anti) webpage?

Using the constant comparative method, examine narrative content holistically to determine how each organization uses master plots to sustain, or undermine, the hegemonic concept of meat.

Category: INOCULATION MESSAGES
Developed following Moran, et al. (2016)

Subcategory 1: Inoculation Topic   Code: **Info About Meat**
                                                     Credibility of
                                                     Endorser
                                                     Lifestyle Norms
                                                     Values
                                                     Other
                                                     None

Coding Procedure: Review the plots used by each organization. Read through the narrative a third time and identify if any inoculating messages are present. Do the narratives reflect or refute messages from the "other side" or each other? Indicate the topic of the inoculation. Generate preliminary notes identify excerpts that may be related to the group's ideology or are otherwise important. Review all notes. What themes do see emerging?

Subcategory 2: Symbolic/Signified/Implied Meaning   Code: **Open**

Coding Procedure: List associative words to describe the emotive content. Use rich descriptions. What themes do you see emerging? Does its meaning rely on its context? Would your associations be different if it was on the opposite (pro/anti) webpage?

Using the constant comparative method, examine narrative content holistically to determine how each organization uses inoculating messages to sustain, or undermine, the hegemonic concept of meat.

CODING INSTRUCTIONS | SEMIOTIC CUES
RO3: Identify the semiotic cues that organizations use to reinforce and/or advance their ideology in the public sphere, including color palettes and photographic images.
Data: Colors and images

CATEGORY: COLOR PALETTES
Take time with the webpage. Identify the properties and symbolic association for primary, secondary and accent colors.
Developed following Eiseman (2000), Kucuk (2015), and Sherin (2012).

Subcategory 1: Hue   **Code: Color name**

      Coding Procedure: Indicate the primary, secondary and accent color(s).

Subcategory 2: Value   **Code: Dark,**
                                                                      Mid,
                                                                       Light

      Coding Procedure: Indicate the density of color(s).

Subcategory 2: Saturation   **Code: Bright,**
                                                                      Mid,
                                                                        Dull

      Coding Procedure: Indicate the intensity of color(s).

Subcategory 4: Temperature   **Code: Warm,**
                                                                      Cool

      Coding Procedure: Indicate whether the color(s) is warm or cool.

Subcategory 5: Symbolic/Signified/Implied Meaning   **Code: Open**

      Coding Procedure: List associative words. Use the associations in the table as a guide. What themes do you see emerging? Does its meaning rely on its context? Would your associations be different if it was on the opposite (pro/anti) webpage?

      Using the constant comparative method, examine visual content holistically to determine how each organization uses visuals to sustain, or undermine, the hegemonic concept of meat.

Colors and Their Typical Word Associations in the U.S.

Hue	Association
Black	Night, mystery, sophisticated, dramatic, expensive, threatening, powerful
White	pureness, cleanliness, weddings, and innocence
Blue	constant, committed, trustworthy, inspires calm Dark blue: powerful, serious, authoritative Light blue: playful
Red	fire, blood, danger, sexy, exciting, dynamic Deep shades: rich, refined, authoritative, mature, elegancy, lush, expensive
Orange	friendly, vital, inviting energizing, not taken seriously, fun, playful, gregarious Lighter shades: sophisticated, upscale, approachable, delicious
Yellow	luminous, enlightening, warming, sunny, imagination, cheerful
Beige, Gray, Taupe	natural, timeless, classy, quality, dependability, durability, solid, enduring, classic, safe

Adapted from "PANTONE Guide to Communicating with Color" by L. Eiseman, 2000, Sarasota, FL: Grafix Press Ltd. and "Design Elements: Color Fundamentals" by A. Sherin, 2012, Beverly, MA: Rockport Publishers.

CATEGORY: PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGES

Take time with the webpage. Make an inventory-like list of all the objects in the image (e.g., brown cow, older farmer in coveralls, cage, flag, family at dinner table). Describe composition (e.g., lighting, leading lines, focal point). Identify symbolic association (e.g., captivity, tradition).
Developed following Abrams and Meyers (2012), Edgar and Rutherford (2012), Lester (2014), Michelson and Valencia (2016), Presi, Maehle, Kleppe (2016), and Stepchenkova and Zhan (2013).

Subcategory 1: Subject   **Code: Food,**
Animal-living,
Animal-DeadorInjured,
Animal-Anthropomorphized,
Person-Male,
Person-Female,
People,
Other

Coding Procedure: Indicate the primary subject of the image. Include rich descriptions in the describe section of the code book.

Subcategory 2: Setting   **Code: Confinement,**
                                                                       OpenSpace,
                                                                       InsideBuilding,
                                                                       Other

Coding Procedure: Indicate the primary setting of the image. Include rich descriptions in the describe section of the code book.

Subcategory 3: Prominence   **Code: CloseUp,**
                                                                       Mid,
                                                                       Distant

Coding Procedure: Indicate the prominence of the primary subject of the image. Include rich descriptions in the describe section of the code book.

Subcategory 4: Perspective   **Code: Downwards,**
                                                                       Straight,
                                                                       Upwards

Coding Procedure: Indicate the perspective towards the primary subject of the image. Include rich descriptions in the describe section of the code book.

Subcategory 5: Symbolic/Signified/Implied Meaning   **Code: Open**

Coding Procedure: List associative words to describe the emotive content. Consider the principles of photographic composition (e.g., lines, lighting, rule of thirds, and depth of field) in explaining how the photographic image convey emphasis and emotion. Use rich descriptions. What themes do you see emerging? Does its meaning rely on its context? Would your associations be different if it was on the opposite (pro/anti) webpage?

Using the constant comparative method, examine visual content holistically to determine how each organization uses visuals to sustain, or undermine, the hegemonic concept of meat.

Checklist to Improve the Trustworthiness of a Content Analysis Study

<u>Preparation Phase</u>

Data Collection Method
- How do I collect the most suitable data for my content analysis?
- How do I pretest my data collection method?

Sampling Strategy
- Is my sample appropriate?
- Is my data well saturated?
- Is my data well saturated?

Selecting the Unit of Analysis
- What is the unit of analysis?
- Is the unit of analysis too narrow or too broad?

<u>Organization Phase</u>

Categorization and Abstraction
- How should the concepts or categories be created?
- Is there any overlap between categories?

Interpretation
- What is the degree of interpretation in the analysis?
- How do I ensure that the data accurately represent the information on the websites?

Representativeness
- How do I check the trustworthiness of the analysis process?
- How do I check the representativeness of the data as a whole?

<u>Reporting Phase</u>

Reporting Results
- Is the content and structure of concepts presented in a clear and understandable way?
- Can the reader evaluate the transferability of the results (are the data, sampling method, and participants described in a detailed manner)?

Reporting Analysis Process
- Is there a full description of the analysis process?
- Is the trustworthiness of the content analysis discussed based on some criteria?

Note. Adapted from "Qualitative content analysis: A focus on trustworthiness,".by S. Elo, M. Kääriäinen, O. Kanste, T. Pölkki, K. Utriainen, and H. Kyngäs, 2014, *SAGE Open*, p. 3.